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春日みかげ

織田信奈の野望

全国版

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ファンタジア文庫

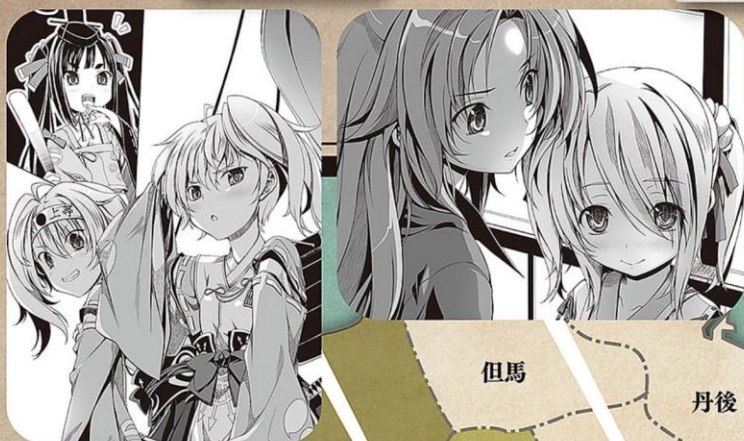


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未来から戦国の世にやってくる少年、相良良晴。尾張の姫大名・織田信奈の家臣となった彼は、信奈の野望……すなわち天下布武のため、戦いに身を置くことになった。数々の強敵を下し、上洛を果たした信奈だったが、大坂本猫寺・毛利連合軍の前に苦戦を強いられる。信奈を庇った良晴は、重傷を負ったまま川に流され、行方不明となってしまう。彼は、記憶を失い、信奈の敵である毛利家の智将・小早川隆景に拾われていた。良晴に今は亡き兄の面影を重ねた隆景は、少しずつその想いを募らせていく。一方で、織田軍と毛利軍の再戦の時は迫っていた。両軍が死力を尽くした戦は、良晴の策を読み切っていた竹中半兵衛の知略により織田軍の勝利で終わる。記憶を取り戻した良晴は信奈の元に帰参し、ようやく織田家に平穏が訪れたかに思われた。だが、そこに甲斐の武田信玄と越後の上杉謙信、不倶戴天の両雄が同時に信奈討伐の兵を挙げたとの報が届き……!?



Translator Intro:

Hello fellow Oda Nobuna no Yabou fans!

Its been awhile but I am back with another volume! This time around we have volume 12 with the otherworldly god of war Uesugi Kenshin as the star!

As with last volume this was made completely with the assistance of machines, dictionaries, some translation checks and a ton of blood sweat and tears! Mostly the tears really.

A huge shoutout again to Translator Aggregator which is basically my god and recommended for anyone that wants to get into Tling with machine assistance. (Warning if you look this up from its actual site, the site has porn ads.)

Accuracy has been assured by people who are fluent in Japanese and the editing was handled primarily by me. As an author myself I aim to release the best product I can.

Once again this was another ~200 hour romp between translating and editing. Translation went faster but editing took longer OTL.

I again encourage the maybe one person with high English literacy, enough time and patience, and willingness to read a translator's note to look into the options available for translating. If you really wanna read something enough, just download translator aggregator, an OCR program, and a scan of a novel and have at it!

Hopefully my second release improves on the first. And for those on the lookout for 13 and 14 they are on the way by another translator. Look forward to it!

For more info on the translation team and future updates, please visit
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OdaNobunaLN.Eng/>

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Chapter 1 – Uesugi Kenshin, rises

The time is the Warring States Era. The setting is the Nagahama Castle of North Omi.

Sagara Yoshiharu's castle.

To serve the Himekishi, Oda Nobuna, who earnestly advocates Tenka Fubu to unify the era of war, Sagara Yoshiharu came from the future.

For some reason he drifted to the Warring States period from modern Japan, it was there that he met and fell in love with Oda Nobuna, and at last pledged his love to Nobuna as the whole world watched – that was how it was supposed to be.

But on this day, at a noodle shop in the Nagahama castle town, the two great genius strategists that the Sagara clan boasted, Takenaka Hanbei and Kuroda Kanbei (baptismal name Don Simeon), let out a sigh.

These two people, Hanbei had a timid nature, the confident Kanbei was the complete opposite, Hanbei had a fragile and pale-complexion, the suntanned and healthy Kanbei was the complete opposite, Hanbei is an onmyoji master strategist and Kanbei is a Namban science strategist and even though they were opposites all the way to their professions, they were closer than real sisters, and recently they would go everywhere together.

“This is troublesome, Kanbei-san. To put out the bad rumors about Nobuna-sama, there was a story that Yoshiharu-san and Imagawa Yoshimoto-sama were going to have a wedding, but at this rate its going to come true. Sob, sob.”

“Simeon isn't very good at love talk about a man and woman. In the first place, why is the thing called love limited to men and women? Can there not be love between girls?”

“Hii? Ka, ka, Kanbei-san? I, I, I, I I, I, I, like Kanbei-san, but what you call I, I, I, love is a little different, well, it shouldn't be between girls.”

“W, w, w, why is Hanbei embarrassed? T, t, that was only an example?”

“Ka, ka, kanbei-san is embarrassed.”

“Uuu. I'm still not very good. Just by saying the word love, my heart tightened and my breathing got rough.”

“Well, in Kanbei-san's case you haven't reached the 'fallen in love with love' stage yet. Heehee.”

“Why are you speaking as if you are a person that is experienced with love Hanbei?”

“N, no, it’s nothing. Sob, sob.”

“Oh? Are you by chance in love with a man? To actually have a man comes and tries to steal Simeon’s important toy Hanbei, I won’t allow it! I will exterminate such people.”

“Ehh? I am Kanbei-san’s toy? We weren’t friends? Sob, sob.”

“...Haaah. Perhaps love is something like a disease. Just by saying the word ‘love’ your wisdom is clouded, your judgment declines, and your emotions run wild, if it becomes full-blown love-sickness you will fall from your seat as strategist. Hanbei is still inexperienced, right?”

“Heehee. It’s an unrequited love but I’m happy enough so it’s alright. In this way even just with my feelings for this person, I have a lot of strength to live.”

“Unrequited love~? Isn’t it painful? In short, I will continue to be pronounced as the second greatest strategist in the world, I can’t be the greatest strategist?”

“It may still be difficult for Kanbei-san, the love formed with a partner isn’t the only love in this world. Because love has many forms.”

“Muu, you are still acting like an adult...that Hanbei’s loved one isn’t Simeon, it’s disappointing.”

“Th, th, therefore, it isn’t g, g, good to be between g, g, girls?”

“Okay, I’ve decided. Now, Hanbei, let me teach you who is the owner of Hanbei’s body! Muhuhu!”

“D, d, don’t, stop~! Please!”

“Ah, oh ya, Hanbei. I bought a large number of books in Sakai. Simeon devoured all of the Namban war records and history books one by one. I even read the Ming Dynasty’s ‘Romance of the Three Kingdoms’. I bet the Namban have tactics to oppose the strongest Takeda cavalry. Hehehe.”

“Heeeh? Why the ‘Romance of the Three Kingdoms’? That isn’t a strategy document, it’s a story.”

“You can even study the cute words and gestures of the ancient Himekishis of China and Korea. Well, this Simeon that can read the original directly and can monopolize the latest tactics of the Namban. It’s a given that I won’t translate it. Hehehe. With this I win Hanbei! First class Kurokan!”

“Heeeeh? Meanie~.”

Next to where the bullied child Hanbei and the bullying child Kanbei were making a ruckus, Yoshiharu's childish younger sister, Nene, was slurping stewed udon with a huge shiitake mushroom while having a long chat with the storekeeper of the noodle shop about the product.

"It's extremely hard to throw away the fried mackerel somen that Onii-sama recommended, but this 'Noppei udon' is very good too! In this way we can increase add to the new local specialties, and it will be useful for promoting Nagahama!"

"Huh. According to Lord Sagara's planned 'Nagahama-cho promotion project' we need three things to revitalize the town. One is 'B-class Gourmet'. I don't understand the meaning of his future language at all, but it is said to be a food that becomes a feature of the town. When you are speaking of Nagahama it is mackerel, but I have recently added the power of udon."

"Shikoku has turned into 'Udon country',"

By the way, Yoshiharu also preached that the other two elements to promote the town is a 'sanctuary' and 'mascot', these two concepts were too difficult for the people of Nagahama in the Warring States era.

"In neighboring Azuchi, the world's greatest castle, the Azuchi Castle will soon be complete and a celebration will be held. The Nagahaman merchants in the beginning were happy that 'if people gather in Azuchi, then neighboring Nagahama will also prosper', and when Lord Sagara returned to the Oda clan from the Mori clan he said 'Naive! Nobuna intends to cultivate Azuchi into a new huge world-famous tourist city. Already, the highway which reaches from the north, south, east, and west to Azuchi is quickly being constructed. Nagahama's tourists will also be absorbed by the straw effect to Azuchi! [T/N: Azuchi will not only pull in people that were going to it, but everyone that would be going to the neighboring areas because its so magnificent. Comes from oil terminology.] At this rate, Nagahama will be a ghost town! We have to hurry and work out a plan to revitalize the town and counter Azuchi! He was very vigilant. Oh, I don't understand the meaning of some of his words at all."

"It is said that at the summit of Mt. Azuchi there is an extremely tall castle tower! On a clear day, can you look out over Mt. Fuji?"

Meanwhile, the ninja that serves Yoshiharu, Goemon, was hanging from the ceiling of the noodle shop. "Once the long-awaited Azuchi Castle is completed, the strongest enemy Uesugi Kenshin declared war against the Oda clan. It's a necessawy wattle for Sagara-Shi." She muttered with a lisping voice.

"...I don't know whether or not Sagara-shi is a large enough vessel that he won't burst even if he holds onto all of the fruits. Although you were able to return from the Mori country in one piece, your opponenf thif time is Uechugi Kenchin. Well, it will be a sight to see. Fufufu."
(もうりけでちんちんともこひとまわりちえいちょうちたとはいえ、こんどのおあいてはあによ、うえちゅぎけんちん)

Without understanding what she was talking about, Nene let out a cheerful voice and pointed at Goemon.

“Sh... Shut up!”



“Sagara Yoshiharu? Let’s head to Azuchi Castle now! The castle tower will be completed soon and the grand unveiling ceremony will be held! There will be sightseers coming from all over Japan!”

“Azuchi Castle is going to be unveiled? Even though she just declared war against Uesugi Kenshin, is Nobuna alright? She seems extremely calm.”

“No. Rather, now that Uesugi Kenshin-san and Takeda Shingen-san are proceeding to the capital at the same time, we have to pretend to be calm, or a revolt will occur underfoot. As expected of Nobuna-san.”

“Is that how it is. By the way, you are sticking to me too much Yoshimoto-chan...”

“Just right! Nobuna-san’s Azuchi Castle unveiling and the wedding between you and I, the Shogun,” Imagawa Yoshimoto’s eyes shined and she clung onto Sagara Yoshiharu’s arm.

Imagawa Yoshimoto, the former “Champion of Totomi”, originally her destiny was to have her neck taken by the Oda army in the battle of Okehazama. Because Sagara Yoshiharu spared her life with the reason of “she is a beautiful girl”, she is now the figurehead shogun serving Oda Nobuna.

She has a selfish personality that leaves troubles for other people to deal with, a lazy person and natural airhead with many weak points. But with white skin and long black hair, large determined eyes, well arranged features, a big chest that does not match her delicate body, if it is only in appearances she can match Oda Nobuna for the position of “world’s number one beauty.”

That Imagawa Yoshimoto, in this way embraced her fiancée Sagara Yoshiharu with a smiling face and entwined her long limbs around him.

“Why was I pushed down by Yoshimoto-chan in the tea house? In the first place, why will Yoshimoto-chan and I have a wedding? I don’t understand!”

That’s right.

There were many twists and turns, and now Sagara Yoshiharu had become the fiancée of the Seii Taishogun, Imagawa Yoshimoto.

The Sagara retainer corps that were worried about Yoshiharu’s body can’t approach the tea house – Yoshimoto drove them away with her spirit alone.

“Life really is strange. You don’t know what will happen. When I met you for the first time, I wouldn’t even dream that I would devote my heart and soul to such a savage and vulgar boy.”

“Y, y, yoshimoto-chan? This is pretend right? Look. Because it became known in all of Japan that Nobuna is in a romantic relationship with me, the man from the future, Nobuna’s reputation has fallen. With the rumor about usurping the Yamato Gosho, there are enemies in all directions. Therefore, in order to get rid of the bad rumors, we adopted the plan to hold a wedding between me and a princess that isn’t Nobuna. But even if we say it is a wedding, it’s just a play to fool the public and put out the bad rumors.”

“Oh. Nobuna-san chose the way of Tenka Fubu. That a young beautiful Himekishi will get both the world and love, it’s an impossible story. Most of the samurais are men. Nobuna-san has to give you up in order to get the male samurais to swear loyalty. Otherwise those guys won’t understand, ‘Why that strange monkey known as Sagara Yoshiharu’ right?”

“As for Uesugi Kenshin-san of Echigo, because the vassals want to make the beautiful Kenshin their wife, they were repeatedly at odds and rebelling. So far Nobuna-san has cleverly avoided the problem by gathering Himekishis as followers, but now she has reached this situation as a result of expanding her territory,” Yoshimoto laughed.

“Even though she is stronger in battle than Takeda Shingen, the reason that she was unable to subjugate Kanto or proceed to the capital, but she persistently fought against Takeda Shingen in Shinano’s Kawanakajima, is that there was always discord in Echigo’s vassal troops concerning her.”

“There is hostility in the vassal troops around Uesugi Kenshin...to be fair I only met her once, but Kenshin seemed like a mysterious person who wasn’t of this world. She was beautiful. Like a celestial maiden or God who fell to earth.”

“Yes, yes. Nobuna-san and Shingen-san avoided it well by fostering the development of Himekishis of the same sex, but because Nobuna-san has fallen for you it’s already hopeless.”

“Mmm. That time with the opening of the Amano-Iwato, the relationship between the two of us was made public. With that, it was impossible to talk our way out of it again.”

“There aren’t any Himekishis that can steal Sagara Yoshiharu from Nobuna-san. Even if you weren’t a mysterious future man, your social status wouldn’t be a match for your companion. But there isn’t a problem with me who is disguised as a surrendered general, and has better looks than Nobuna-san. The most beautiful in the world.”

Oh, if its only appearances certainly, Yoshiharu was unintentionally convinced.

“The only gentleman that wouldn’t prostate to my charm would be Kansuke Yamamoto who put his life on the line for little girls. In my case, it isn’t strange if you are snatched from Nobuna-san. Rather, it’s natural. Everyone in Japan is convinced. That’s right. Now it is my turn.

Yes, yes. The world is Nobuna-san's, but love is mine! With the pair of us, both ambitions can be achieved!

"Even so, why did Yoshimoto-chan become so serious for me? Wait. Calm down. Your breasts are touching, calm down."

"I'm pressing them."

"Waiiit, whyyyyy!?"

Yoshiharu noticed that his whole body was becoming hot as was Yoshimoto.

Yoshiharu is a breast lover, but he isn't a cheater. Rather he had a character that was single-minded in love. He didn't harbor an intention to cheat with Yoshimoto, but it seemed that somehow or other his body had a different perspective, and his body was attracted to Yoshimoto and flushed hot.

"You saved my life in Okehazama. Though there are various other reasons, I have acknowledged that you are the world's best man. I have already entrusted the world to Nobuna-san, I will fulfill my love with you. As a result of disguising myself as a hostage of Nobuna-san, my status has fallen to be a good match with Sagara Yoshiharu, I didn't expect that this appearance would prove fortunate. Ohohohoho! Sometimes you have to lose to win."

"It isn't ohohohoho! There are a lot more gentleman that are handsome with a high social position! Why me?"

"Because you saved my life. Isn't it natural?"

"This and that are different! I didn't help Yoshimoto-chan because I wanted a reward! Even if this is the Sengoku Era, I don't want to see a girl have her neck taken no matter what, no more than that!"

"That is the logic of the man from the future. But that type of deeply kind hearted feelings are irresistibly attractive to the Himekishis of the Sengoku Era. Even I didn't think of becoming your wife as a reward at that time. But before I knew it, I was gradually fascinated with your gentleness."

"Hieee~. My heart already belongs to Nobuna! Please, if we are seen like this by Nobuna, both of us will be killed!"

"For you who keeps saving the lives of maidens one after another without thinking, it is retribution. It is a good medicine. It is said that the Himekishi of the Mori Clan, Takakage Kobayakawa, is infatuated with you too, right? She was attracted by your gentleness and was finally thrown away without being granted children, such a pity. I am the same."

When he heard Kobayakawa-san's name, Yoshiharu's chest hurt.

For a period of time, Yoshiharu suffered a serious injury on the battlefield, lost his memory, and served the Mori clan.

At that time Yoshiharu had completely forgotten all about Nobuna, to repay Kobayakawa whose kindness saved his life, he put in all of his effort saying “I will protect Kobayakawa-san!”

Kobayakawa Takakage was a late bloomer, and Yoshiharu’s experience with love was reset to zero.

While the both of them came to hold intense love for each other they hesitated, Yoshiharu recovered his memory suddenly, and an unexpected twist like a prank of fate occurred and he returned to the Oda clan.

Even now when remembering the lonely profile of Kobayakawa-san, Yoshiharu let out an “ugh” and held his chest.

“When you got intimate with Kobayakawa Takakage there were extenuating circumstances since you had lost your memory, but I am even more pitiful.”

“Then from now on I should leave a dying girl alone? I can’t do such a thing! No matter what the consequences, whatever happens later, I can’t do that! When I spared Yoshimoto-chan’s life, how history will deviate if Imagawa Yoshimoto is spared, I didn’t think about that kind of thing at all...”

“Heehee. It’s so foolish that it could be said that it disqualifies you as a Sengoku Era general, Sagara Yoshiharu. You are just so kind like that. Well, let’s go to Azuchi Castle. Or we can have a child before the wedding? I also studied the way of making children by reading a Namban book.”

“A Namban book?”

“Yes. A thing called a printed book has crossed over from Europe and is sold in Sakai and Kyoto. It also contained a book on making children....f-for example you can use your chest to please the men...though it isn’t something I have heard in Japan much...”

“Don’t say such embarrassing things while pressing your breasts!”

At any rate, Yoshiharu hadn’t connected with Nobuna yet.

On top of that, because he had been soundly trained as a pirate by the Murakami Navy for awhile, his body had gotten bigger and his physical strength and stamina had increased more than before, not to mention that he currently had an excess of male hormones. Nevertheless, if he has an affair he will be killed by Nobuna so nothing can be done. Furthermore, while Yoshiharu previously had gained some degree of immunity to big breasts through Shibata Katsue and Yamanaka Shikanosuke, when he lost his memory in the Mori clan his immunity to big breasts

seems to have reset. In other words, Yoshiharu is a healthy excellent Sengoku Era boy – and was at his limit.

“Ohohoho. When you have already touched Nobuna-san’s chest before, how cute.”

“Ah, ah, the size, mm, is different... I...like the difference between an apple and a watermelon. The weight and the presence that was transmitted over is totally different. The apple will fall due to gravity, but as for the watermelon, the watermelon is the universe itself! The universe! It’s very different. Damn it, if Nobuna hears such words I’ll really lose my life.”

“My, my. As I look thinner in clothes it is natural. In the first place, you can’t understand the size of my chest in this juni-hitoe (12 layer kimono). Ohohoho.”

“It, it’s really so big?”

“Yes. It’s probably an equal match for Shibata Katsuie-san. Though naturally, I’m the best in density and shape. To use the words of Shingen herself, my breasts are as stable and majestic like a mountain.”

[T/N: In this sentence, Yoshimoto is making a pun on Shingen’s famous words. Shingen’s Furinkazan, introduced in V4C5 is the topic here. The 4th word, Zan, is the kanji for mountain, which in V4C5, means steady as a mountain and is actually stated as 不動如山, Yoshimoto replaced the 3rd kanji with 乳, which means breasts.]

With a pompous face, Yoshimoto was proud of her breasts.

“... Well, if I touch it.....I won’t be struck by divine punishment, right?”

“This chest belongs only to you.”

“No, wait! That’s right. When I fondled Katsuie’s chest, I was seen and beaten up by Nobuna like in romcoms. Nobuna and Juubei-chan, they have extremely accurate sense of smell, they can smell what I did with girls! In addition, if I touch these watermelon breasts my reason will definitely collapse!”

“Let it collapse. I have never let other men touch them yet. They belong only to you.”

Though her character has always been ditsy, the destructive power of Yoshimoto’s whispering voice is huge.

It’s already useless... as the blood in his head boiled and he began to swoon, Yoshiharu groaned.

“At, at this point, I’ll call to every religion repeatedly. Calm down Sagara Yoshiharu. Namuamidabutsu, Namuamidabutsu! Namumyohorengekyo! [Heart’s Sutra] When Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara practised the deep Prajnaparamita, he saw that the five skandhas were empty;

thus he overcame all ills and suffering. [Lord's Prayer] Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven... heaven...breasts! BREASTS, I WANNA SEE BREASTSSSSSSSSSS!"

[TL Note: Basically, Yoshiharu is calling on Buddha and God to save him... How hopeless...]

No useeeeeeeee!

Even if I can endure the urge to cheat, only huge breasts are impossible! Regardless of my heart, the body acts on its own!

Kobayakawa-san! Juubei-chan! Nobunaaaaaaa! Somebody stop my rampage! Why am I still a healthy teenage boy? I'm in trouble! Ruined!

Yoshiharu was in heat and involuntarily recited a Biblical passage, and self-destructed.

Here is a high school boy.

Yoshiharu shouted "uwaaaaa" and was just about to jump face-first into Yoshimoto's chest.

"By the way, I have supplied an oxcart to go to Azuchi Castle. I want to quickly see the castle town! It is said that that the castle tower of the Azuchi castle is very very high! I want to climb it!"

The spontaneous Yoshimoto stood up without hesitation and avoided Yoshiharu's charge.

She had already forgotten that she had bewildered Yoshiharu with her huge chest and sweet whispers.

"Fuguuu! My nose, my nose!"

"Oh, what did you do Sagara Yoshiharu?"

"...No. It was just well deserved divine punishment. I'm sorry."

Yes, Yoshimoto-chan is such a person, Yoshiharu wiped his face that was smeared with his nosebleed. *I steal the girl's heart when I save her life, if I repeatedly do this everywhere it becomes a problem*, he sighed at the cause and effect of his actions he hadn't been conscious of that Yoshimoto taught him.

If I rescue Shikanosuke, or Hanbei and Kanbei who are from the same Oda clan, it won't become a troublesome problem. There is a relationship of *companions* equal to *family* between Hanbei and me. However, love with Kobayakawa-san of the Mori clan, that relationship becomes a problematic situation between the Oda and Mori clans, it could be the source of conflicts that can't be easily solved.

“The encirclement by the Ashikaga fake shogun, Uesugi, Takeda, and Mori is almost complete, right? If Nobuna-san is unveiling the Azuchi castle at such a time, she is a big shot.”

“...What the hell. In exchange for making the Honbyo Temple lose earlier than historically, Uesugi Kenshin who never decided to unite with Takeda historically has formed an encircling net...until now, there was a tendency for history to balance out somewhere even when I was running around and altering history, but this time there isn't a way to come together to balance it! What should I do?”

“Now, now. We can manage it if we entrust it to the Nobuna-san that defeated me. We don't need to worry about it at all, ohohoho.” Yoshimoto laughed.

Perhaps Yoshimoto may be the greatest person in the Sengoku Era, Yoshiharu thought.



Echigo, Kasugayama Castle.

Uesugi Kenshin's castle.

“The Dragon of Echigo” Uesugi Kenshin, so far almost all of her battles had unfolded in Kanto.

With the worthy rival “The Tiger of Kai” Takeda Shingen, she had battled five times at Shinanogawa's Kawanaka island. In the “Fourth battle of Kawanakajima”, Kenshin and Shingen attempted to fight to the end. Most of the officers in both armies were injured, and it is said that a large percentage died in battle, it was an all-out war, a rare thing in the Sengoku Era.

In addition, to control Kanto and revive the Uesugi clan, she had to repeatedly dispatched troops to Kanto and made an enemy of Hojo Ujiyasu who had the earnest wish of subjugating Kanto.

Uesugi Kenshin's original name is “Nagao Kagetora.”

Echigo's shugo [T/N: provincial governor], the Nagao family, was the main supporter of the Uesugi clan.

At one point, the Uesugi government that was in control of Kanto was chased out by Hojo and ran away to Echigo. “I transfer everything of the Uesugi clan to you. I want you to drive the Hojo from Kanto and revive the Uesugi clan.” She was asked and succeeded to the Uesugi clan, personally became the Kanto administrator, changed her name to Uesugi Kenshin, and repeatedly dispatched troops to Kanto.

Because Uesugi Kenshin always battled for the sake of justice, her territory did not increase.

When Takeda Shingen invades Shinano, or after dealing a crucial blow to Hojo Ujiyasu who tried to steal the Kanto area, Kenshin would return to Echigo and Kasugayama Castle like the wind.

She was a rare military commander that lacked a craving for territory.

As for her vassals, no matter how much they fought their territory did not increase, and they were continually roped into this holy war, so to speak, year after year.

Without the strength of the battlefield talent called the personification of the god of war Bishamonten, Kenshin would have already fallen – However, that was the reality. The invincible, undefeated Uesugi Kenshin's Kasugayama Castle hadn't even once been invaded

But, because it was requested by many generals, she had to simultaneously fight with the two great rivals Takeda Shingen and Hojo Ujiyasu. So far she was not able to have a decisive victory or defeat in Kanto or Kawanakajima.

Both Shingen and Ujiyasu are famous commanders that represent the Warring States period, but Kenshin's battle genius was far and away beyond, to the point of divine possession. Even the great strategist named Kansuke Yamamoto who supported the Takeda army, after meticulously preparing, was defeated before the abnormal battlefield intuition that Kenshin carried.

Shingen and Ujiyasu couldn't defend against Kenshin's supremely fierce attacks individually, and it is said they had no choice but to become allies while holding a mutual dislike for each other.

But Kenshin, had a fatal habit that doesn't seem like a Sengoku Era general – she will never punish a person who has surrendered and will pardon them unconditionally. She won't take territory away from a general that surrenders. No matter how many times they betray her, if they surrender they will be forgiven any number of times.

Because Kenshin isn't a person, but a god – because she is Bishamonten.

To fight for justice, to reform a villain through mercy into a virtuous person, that is the purpose of Kenshin's wars.

Therefore, Shingen and Ujiyasu contrived a plot to disturb the peace among the Uesugi vassals, and can be said to have obstructed Kenshin's advances.

Kenshin will dispatch troops anywhere to demonstrate justice if asked.

On the request of Asai Asakura, she had built up troops to march to the capital in order to fight to the finish with Oda Nobuna who reigns over the whole country, but Takeda Shingen interfered and hindered them. In addition, at that time Kenshin didn't have a personal grudge

with Oda Nobuna, and lacked the ambition to advance to the capital and become the ruler of the whole country.

But when Kenshin witnessed the miracle of the Amano-Iwato, she suddenly decided “My life’s last enemy, Oda Nobuna”, made peace with her two bitter rivals Takeda Shingen and Hojo Ujiyasu, and through a sequence of events formed the ‘Aigoshi Tripartite Alliance’ which became the keystone to the second encirclement of the Oda clan. Nothing less than a miracle in the Warring States period.

Kenshin who visited the capital alone and declared war on Oda Nobuna in Kyoto, was now barricaded in Bishamondo within Kasugayama Castle, and was playing the biwa.

Kenshin spends most of her time when not in battle in Bishamondo.

This is because Kenshin who was born with a body without skin pigment, is weak to the light of the day.

But that isn’t all.

When the time to dispatch troops approaches, Kenshin stays in Bishamondo and waits for the voice of Bishamonten.

In the Uesugi clan, there aren’t any war councils to assemble all of the vassal troops.

All of the battles are decided by Kenshin alone after hearing the voice from Bishamonten.

Only the Himekishi chosen as the young new strategist, Naoe Kanetsugu, was permitted to stand in front of the door of Bishamondo and protect Kenshin.

“Kenshin-sama, we have made peace with Takeda Shingen who obstructed our advance to the capital, I will let the capital advancement forces depart with Shingen. The time comes soon. On that occasion, Kenshin-sama will submit a great command to the forces advancing to the capital.”

The large number of rioters standing in the way of a march to the capital in the Hokuriku area between Omi and Echigo were weakened after the Honbyo Temple supporters that comprised the main force disarmed themselves and went back to farming following the peace agreement between the Osaka Honbyo Temple and the Oda clan.

Both Kenshin’s father and grandfather lost their lives fighting against the rioters in the Hokuriku area.

This is why Kenshin was destined to not be compatible with the rioters. Having said that, it wasn't possible for her to perform a cruel act such as exterminating the followers who had found salvation to keep living in the despair of these turbulent times.

The faith that the gentle Kenshin carries through 'justice and 'mercy', "kindness that can ruin an enemy", achieving those ideals for herself became shackles in the Warring States period.

The realist Takeda Shingen incited the rioting groups of Hokuriku many times and interfered with Kenshin's holy war, but Kenshin still couldn't destroy the uprising.

But now, most of the followers have left and the uprising lost power, some of the followers of the resistance faction remain, but only the local ruling families that were rooted in the land continued their resistance to the Uesugi clan's rule.

The Jinbo family of Ecchu that lost half of their military power to the Hokuriku rioters.

The Hatakeyamas of Noto who have vassal groups in the Kenshin faction and the Oda faction.

The Kaga of Echizen who joined with the first retainer of the Oda Clan, Shibata Katsue, to defend against Kenshin's advance to the capital.

If I defeat these three parties in turn, I can fight a decisive battle with Oda Nobuna.

"Our earnest wish of the resurrection of the Kanto district's Uesugi kanrei was virtually achieved by the Aigoshi Tripartite Alliance. The issue of possession of Kawanakajima was also settled. Now is the time Kenshin-sama, the territories of other countries – you must confer the heavy decision to steal Ecchu, Noto, and Kaga by force."

While Uesugi is ever-victorious, she doesn't take the territory of other countries.

She wasn't like a Warring States daimyo in this sense.

In order to show justice to the world filled with wars, to destroy immorality and crack down upon malicious motives of everybody so they may be reborn as a good person, the war which does not have greed or benefits had continued wholeheartedly.

Only this time, Kenshin must go through the other countries in succession to reach the capital.

As before, I let the powerful families of the native people pledge their loyalty and recognize their land ownership with the methods of Bishamonten.

While Kenshin is advancing to the capital through the Hokuriku area slowly with a heart of justice and mercy, her eternal rival, Takeda Shingen, will arrive at Omi with a furious force.

Takeda Shingen doesn't hesitate. No mercy.

When she decides not to move she will be imperturbable like a mountain and not move an inch, and will overrun an enemy country with lightning speed when she sees a good opportunity.

Invading like a fire, that is all it means.

“Kenshin-sama, our former way of life has to change entirely. It will benefit Takeda Shingen if we are late. Will it be Kenshin-sama who continued a lonely war to show justice in these chaotic times, or will Takeda Shingen who doesn't conceal her ambition and desire. Who will become the winner will be determined by this war to advance to the capital.”

Naoe Kanetsugu waited.

The miracle 'Aikoshi Tripartite alliance'

The triple alliance that was entered by Kai, Sagami, and Echigo.

Kai's Takeda Shingen.

Sagami's Hojo Ujiyasu.

Echigo's Uesugi Kenshin.

The process that these three clans went through to come to an alliance and form the “Oda encirclement”, Kanetsugu looked back on it – when Uesugi Kenshin held a three-way summit at Kamakura with Takeda Shingen and Hojo Ujiyasu, Kanetsugu was attending next to Kenshin prepared for any unexpected situation.



To go back in time a bit.

The Kou Aikoshi triple alliance between Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen was a miracle of history mediated by Hojo Ujiyasu, 'The alliance meeting at Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine'.

In this historic space, Naoe Kanetsugu's presence as an aide of Kenshin was permitted.

The Tsurugaoka Hachiman shrine in Kamakura, Sagami province is the holy land of the Bando Samurai.

The administrative office of Japan's first samurai government, the Kamakura Shogunate, it was in this Kamakura.

In the time when Uesugi Kenshin was still called Nagao Kagetora, after having taken the family name of the fallen Kanto kanrei clan that was driven out by Hojo Ujiyasu's schemes to conquer Kanto, she invaded Kanto and shut Hojo Ujiyasu in Odawara Castle. The place where the ceremony for assuming the office of the kanrei of Kanto was performed, it was this Tsurugaoka Hachiman shrine.

Naoe Kanetsugu personally witnessed the impossible scene of the three Himekishis that continued to compete for hegemony of the Kanto warring states gathered in one hall, and could no longer stop her body from trembling.

"The previous shogun's little sister, Ashikaga Yoshiaki, is the legitimate shogun. I must deal out divine justice on the two of you that have disturbed the order of Kanto. But with the order of Ashikaga Yoshiaki-sama, I must advance to the capital. Besides, the greedy woman Oda Nobuna is unpardonable. To open the Amano-Iwato, to take the world, and to grab a love with a difference in social position, there is no end to that person's ambitions. She is greedier than you, Takeda Shingen."

Echigo's Bishamonten, Uesugi Kenshin.

Kanetsugu reveres the fantastic-looking Himekishi with red eyes like a rabbit and skin that is white as snow.

No desire for territory. Therefore, Kenshin is not a Warring States general. She fought to restore justice and order. When asked by a weakened person, she will carry out a holy war without taking a reward.

And, the Kenshin that Kanetsugu watched for a long time, was a very lonely person.

Kenshin had lost her father and older brother early in life. As for the vassals that took the place of her father and older brother and supported Kenshin, they passed away one by one. She promised a "life abstaining from sexual intercourse" to live as an incarnation of Bishamonten. She kept men away, forbid herself from falling in love, and as her vassals died one by one, Kenshin's loneliness increased.

"Hmph. I thought we would never need to meet again, but you are the same as ever Uesugi Kenshin. Is a person's desire that hateful? While the three of us were fighting in this way in the east, Oda Nobuna had taken advantage of this and taken the lead. The caliber to make the Honbyo temple open their gates, the victor who takes over the world is Oda Nobuna. If the both of us want to proceed to the capital, this is our last chance."

The Tiger of Kai, Takeda Shingen.

In contrast with the justice general, Kenshin, she gained power as a warring states general by invading other countries without reserve and expanded her territory, the Himekishi who reached until it was said she was the top candidate to be the next ruler of the whole country.

The famous commander who unleashed a fierce battle five times against Kenshin in Kawanakajima.

The two great rivals who won't yield one step, the military arts of Kenshin and the wisdom of Shingen made desperate efforts in battles without finally reaching a conclusion, when Oda Nobuna suddenly rose onto reached the stage and checkmated the world.

Therefore, Shingen also came to an impossible decision.

Then, at the same time that Uesugi Kenshin saw the reddish hair of Takeda Shingen as she stepped into the room, her white cheeks reddened slightly.

It was an extremely small change that an outsider wouldn't be able to notice, but Naoe Kanetsugu who always stared at Kenshin thought, *the usually quiet Kenshin-sama is somewhat different.*

She is quiet, sorrowful and her feelings are not put onto the table, Kenshin always should be conducting herself as 'the incarnation of Bishamonten'. Only in front of Takeda Shingen were her feelings confused like a little girl.

On the other hand, Takeda Shingen, though she was sitting down at a distance where she could extend her hand and touch her deadly enemy Uesugi Kenshin, was calm and self-controlled.

Naoe Kanetsugu saw the form of the perfected commander Takeda Shingen there.

After a long silence continued between both of them, the first person to speak to the other party was unexpectedly Uesugi Kenshin.

"Takeda Shingen. You beat me to the punch and previously blocked my advancement to the capital, and left Asai Asakura who was attacked by the Oda forces in a lurch?"

"Yes, it may be so."

"Asai Asakura should have been a friend who formed an alliance with you to fight against Oda together. Although discarding alliances is your specialty, you are selfish to the bitter end."

"It's different Kenshin. Because you didn't kill me in Kawanakajima, I became this way. If you are angry, you should be angry at yourself. Or should we be happy that we are alive and can meet again? An impossible thing has occurred in this way."

“.....”

Kenshin mutely held a bamboo staff in her hand! And flung it against the floor.

“Then let’s begin the final decisive battle now. The sixth battle of Kawanakajima.”

“Well. It is the same as before, you can only talk to a person through battle Uesugi Kenshin.”

“You shouldn’t talk. I am Bishamonten. I fight for justice and to crush immorality, and to reform villains into a virtuous person. I have lived only for this reason. The greedy woman is you. The woman who banished her father and stole the whole country of Kai. You always try to dirty my righteousness with desire.”

“...Kenshin. Is this a complaint now? The moment when both you and I watched the opening of the Amano-Iwato, you set Oda Nobuna who rushes to the strongest seat in the country as your final enemy, you should have decided to fight against Oda Nobuna.”

“The moment I saw your face, my thoughts changed. Shingen. Why did you cause so many sacrifices with Kawanakajima and do not utter a reproachful remark to me? I’m the enemy who defeated your younger sister.”

“That is right. From the start we are destined to be incompatible. To hold the heavens together now, it is an impossible story. Do we fight and perish together? In Kawanakajima.”

“If you desire it.”

“...Hmph. It’s only a joke. Why do I have to commit a double suicide with you? Everyone that died a noble death in Kawanakajima, they will have died a useless death.”

“It’s different. Shingen, if you didn’t invade Shinano, nothing would have happened. The two of us didn’t need to fight on the battlefield. Everything is the result of your desire and ambition.”

Shingen looked down at Kenshin while narrowing her eyes – Shingen is a Himekishi that is large for a woman while Kenshin is small, when meeting face to face with Shingen in this way, it completely looked like an adult and a child.

“Kenshin. I’m different than you and am only an ordinary human. I’m not Bishamonten or Acala (one of the Buddhist Wisdom Kings) either. The ones who rule these chaotic times are humans. Not God or Buddha. Such a thing won’t save a person anymore, they lost their power to save people long ago. You pose as Bishamonten, continue to fight without compensation to demonstrate justice, and when you fought you won. You kept winning. You still don’t know defeat. But what were you able to obtain with that? In the long run the Kanto area became Hojo

Ujiyasu's, and Shinano became mine. What on earth did you get? You quit being a human, and did you become lonelier than anyone else?"

"Takeda Shingen. Do you deny all of me?"

"That's not it. You would deny all of me. What do you know of the relations between me and my father? To what extent do you understand? Do you think I gleefully expelled my own father from Kai?"

"You are a child that lacks filial piety. Takeda Shingen. After all you are an unforgivable evil. I hate you. You are maddening."

"You don't get along well. That's right, Uesugi Kenshin. The young girl of Echigo that calls herself Bishamonten. A genius of war, the strongest Himekishi called the God of War. However, being the strongest is not enough in this Warring States world. I will break open the Bishamondo door, I desperately want to drag you down from heaven."

"You can't do it. Has there been even one time that a lone horseman has ridden into my headquarters where I waited?"

"Don't say that, Kenshin. I do not have divine possession like you. The head of the Takeda clan, a large number of families and followers, retainer companies, I am responsible for the citizens of my territory. Is such reckless selfishness allowed!?"

In response to the Bishamonten's composure exploding as Kenshin vented her anger, even Shingen was gradually beginning to express feelings that should have been hidden in a place for diplomacy. Kanetsugu was puzzled. The tiger of Kai and the dragon Echigo. The distance between them was closing so that they could feel each other's breath on their faces. A fierce duel to the death was about to begin! The continuation of the battle of Kawanakajima begins in this space!

"Wait! Both of you! This is not the place for declaring war! We must join in an alliance of our three countries and assemble to destroy Oda Nobuna! Calm down!"

With beautiful long black hair and an impressively cold gaze, the daimyo of Sagami, Hojo Ujiyasu, while stopping the explosive situation between Shingen and Kenshin, returned the talk to the main subject.

"Both of you leave it at that! There is a solution for the Kawanakajima problem!"

Hojo Ujiyasu carried the letter from Ashikaga Yoshiaki overhead, and the ever loyal to authority Kenshin was the first to fall silent.

For Shingen, when Kenshin became quiet, there were no further provocations.

“As for me until now, I sent a ninja carefully selected from the Fuma, and sowed a seed of discord among the Oda clan’s vassals. It is the Hojo’s style to gain victory without fighting. But the surrender of Honbyo Temple was three years earlier than my expectations. In this case it is too early for the seeds of discord to blossom, and Oda Nobuna will take the country. Both of you, Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen, you two are stubborn and won’t act in concert. It is because of this that a third party has profited while you fight.”

The conqueror of Kanto, Hojo Ujiyasu, is rarely called the ‘The King of Sagami’ and is usually called the ‘Lord of Odawara castle’, the reason is that she confines herself in the largest castle in the world, Odawara Castle.

When she received a violent attack by Uesugi Kenshin, or when she was in a confrontation with Takeda Shingen over the dominion of Suraga after Imagawa Yoshimoto left, Ujiyasu avoided a decisive battle, she was crafty and escaped the crisis by holing up in Odawara Castle and avoiding the opponent.

Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen. While being attacked by the strongest rivals in the Sengoku Era, she survived and expanded. In fact, it can be said that the stamina and political power of Hojo Ujiyasu who steadily changed vast sections of the Kanto area to Hojo territory can be called an abnormality.

“Until now, the three of us have been continually fighting over the Kanto provinces. The one who took that opportunity to proceed to the capital like a thieving cat and steadily subjugate the capital, is that detestable Oda Nobuna. The three of us who are sandwiched between the Conqueror of Oshuu, Date Masamune, and the ruler of the whole country Oda Nobuna on the east and west should form the Kou Aikoshi alliance right now. I will stop Date Masamune alone. The defenses of Odawara Castle will become an even greater impregnable fortress. Even if the Oushuu army raids us again, we can hold them for one year. Meanwhile, you can proceed to the capital and crush the Oda army.”

Ujiyasu pushed hard to persuade Shingen and Kenshin with “Let’s forget everything that has happened so far.”

After Imagawa Yoshimoto was defeated by Oda Nobuna at Okehazama and surrendered, Hojo and Takeda were temporarily at odds over the ex-Imagawa territory, but an even stronger alliance was formed now.

“Shingen. You lost your darling younger sister Nobushige at Kawanakajima. I understand the feeling of wanting to settle it with Kenshin. But do that after ruining Oda Nobuna!”

It was Kenshin that reacted furiously to Hojo Ujiyasu’s words.

“...I mourn for Nobushige who passed on to the next world every day in Bishamondo. I entered a foolish war to take the one neck of Takeda Shingen...”

Kenshin did not tell a lie.

Naoe Kanetsugu also knew that Kenshin still regretted the innumerable dead friends and foes that fell in Kawanakajima.

The fourth battle of Kawanakajima was an unprecedentedly fierce battle in Japanese history.

By repeating the battles at Kawanakajima which seemed like they would continue endlessly, both armies became tired.

“The palace may dispatch troops to Kawanakajima just out of a desire to meet Uesugi Kenshin.” “Isn’t it possible that Kenshin just wants to spend time on the same battleground as Takeda Shingen?” The vassal corps of both armies began harbor dissatisfaction and suspicion and were on the brink of exploding.

Uesugi who pledged a life of celibacy and would not let men near, and Takeda Shingen who somehow had no rumors of a man despite having a pleasure-seeking personality and surrounded herself with Himekishis she gathered, they truthfully are in a relationship between women – it may be a romantic relationship, they may visit Kawanakajima on the pretense of competition due to being fated enemies and are repeatedly having a secret lover’s tryst. This believable rumor came out of nowhere, and troubled the retainers in both armies.

Both of their powers are completely equal, if they fought directly with each other they wouldn’t be able to get off safely, and both armies would be destroyed at the same time. Shingen and Kenshin pacified the discontent vassal armies, but the Echigo army was not satisfied and stated “I endured this battle without reward simply because I thought it was a war for justice, not so you can enter into a lover’s tryst with Takeda Shingen”, and the Takeda army got angry saying “How many times will you dispatch troops for such a small plot of land in the corner of Shinano. What on earth is with this war?”

Finally Shingen and Kenshin said at the same time, “I will bring an end to this war” and reached a conclusion with the fourth battle of Kawanakajima – it was an unprecedented all-out war between the famous commander and the god of war that staked everything as they crashed into the front.

In the middle of the night, the Takeda army secretly separated into two groups, the detached force carried out a surprise attack in the early morning at Saijoyama to chase them to Yawatabara. And the Takeda army personally led by Shingen waited in advance at Yawatabara – the certain victory surprise attack plan was created by Shingen’s genius tactician Kansuke Yamamoto after mustering all of his knowledge, ‘The woodpecker strategy’. The god of war Kenshin’s genius manifested suddenly in a divine revelation, and she went down to Saijoyama under the cover of the fog late at night and aimed at the Takeda’s army in Yawatabara, beginning a fierce battle.

Uesugi Kenshin personally entered the jaws of death from Saijoyama between the Takeda forces at Yawatabara and the upcoming Takeda detachment.

At little bit before the Takeda detached force realized that Saijoyama was empty and arrived at the battlefield in Yawatahara.

In fact, Kenshin challenged the game of ‘an all or nothing gamble’.

Uesugi Kenshin that led the Echigo army personally rushed at Shingen’s headquarters.

The weaker Takeda troops took a large number of casualties, but to protect their leader Shingen they do not retreat even one step, Shingen’s headquarters became a mountain and in the end did not break.

And when the Takeda detachment that rushed from Saijoyama drew near the back of the Echigo army and blocked their path to retreat, the war situation changed completely and the Echigo army fell into a danger that risked annihilation.

The cornered Kenshin, changed the military formation to the ‘Rolling Wheel’ and was sealed by the Echigo army. All of the officers made an arc around Kenshin, and every group coped with attacks in all directions while rotating like a whirlpool. For the Takeda forces, while fighting against one unit they were hit by an invasion of the next unit in the rotation, and then were hit by the following unit again. Each unit seemed to have become one creature, and the offense and defense continued endlessly in a circular movement.

This creation was originally produced by Kenshin, a strange formation that ignored conventional tactics, it can gain time before all of the Echigo army’s officers and men became completely exhausted, and can cope with the pincer attack, and in the case that the morale of both sides was high, it was a type of forbidden tactics that would result in a fierce battle until all members died an honorable death together.

Kenshin and the Echigo army were cornered so they had to use the forbidden strategy, and then Shingen and the Takeda forces were also cornered.

The Echigo troops and the Takeda army, almost all of their members were injured together in the desperate struggle, and the casualties were innumerable.

It became an unprecedented fight to the death.

During the era when guns hadn’t been brought to the battlefield in massive quantities, there hadn’t been a battle with so many casualties in Japan’s history.

The soldiers of both armies were practically destroyed. However, even when it became impossible for both sides to maintain their battle formations, they took up their spears and continued to fight to put an end to the endless Samsara called Kawanakajima.

In the end, when Takeda Shingen’s headquarers was on the brink of collapsing, Uesugi Kenshin personally charged in as a single horseman, and it became a fierce single combat between the generals.

It wasn't settled.

Including Takeda Shingen's right-hand man, and her younger sister Takeda Nobushige who was even called Shingen's other self, the lives of a tremendous number of people disappeared at Kawanakajima.

While running through the bloodstained battlefield, Kenshin deeply regretted "why did I do this stupid battle", while Shingen clung to the dead body of her younger sister and wailed.

With that, the rumor that Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin were in a romantic relationship disappeared -

While Shingen and Kenshin were thinking about Kawanakajima -

Hojo Ujiyasu had finished reading the letter from Ashikaga Yoshiaki aloud.

Ashikaga Yoshiaki was ridiculed as the Child Shogun and the Shogun of Letters.

She was now freeloading with the Mori clan.

She is still a little girl, but as a person of the Ashikaga family she excels at schemes, and is enormously generous about rewards. "The person who reaches the capital first will become the kanrei of the Kanto region under the Ashikaga Shogunate."

Uesugi Kenshin, Takeda Shingen, one of the Mori, whoever reaches the capital first will effectively be the ruler of the whole country, Yoshiaki suddenly gave an extraordinary reward.

To make the two great heroes of the Sengoku Era, Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen suspend hostilities, if you let them compete for who will arrive at the capital first, Oda Nobuna will be unable to prevent it and soon perish.

At any rate, if they delay by a single step, their enemy will become the ruler of the whole country. Both Kenshin and Shingen who were opposed until now, they would advance to the capital in a frenzy.

To think up something like this, even if she is very young as one would expect of the Ashikaga family, Naoe Kanetsugu was past being shocked and instead rather admired her.

The second proposal.

"Hojo Ujiyasu's younger sister will be adopted as a daughter by Uesugi Kenshin who has a vow of celibacy. The princess will become the Kanto kanrei after Kenshin's death."

While the Hojo clan is solely in pursuit of control of Kanto, Uesugi Kenshin is trying to carry through justice the revival of the Kanto administrators, the Uesugi clan. It was an exquisitely clever scheme that fulfills both duties together.

Kenshin respects the authority of the Yamato Gosho and Ashikaga Shogunate, and tries to defend the old traditions and systems. She is not particular about blood. As long as the container called the house is continued, she believes order can be maintained.

For this reason, Kenshin herself was originally born of the Nagao house which is only a vassal line of the Uesugi clan, and inherited the Kanto Kanrei Uesugi house.

As for Hojo, they will even obtain hegemony over the Kanto area. Originally, even the surname of Hojo was only borrowed from a prestigious family of Kanto. Even if 'Hojo' becomes 'Uesugi', if they get control over Kanto there are no problems at all.

However, the third and last suggestion that Ashikaga Yoshiaki proposed was a problem.

"I will make Kawanakajima a neutral area under the direct control of the Ashikaga clan."

The root of conflict between Uesugi and Takeda, "I will take Kawanakajima from both", will cut off both of them from Kawanakajima with a clever plan.

Anyways, the present Ashikaga shogun doesn't have any territory under her direct control.

Her standing is that of a temporary guest of the Mori clan.

Therefore, Shingen and Kenshin can't say that they will give land to the Ashikaga family.

But this wasn't a condition that Shingen and Kenshin could easily accept.

"How is it? Isn't this a very good suggestion? I'm ok with this. Nobody loses, and they remained justified. But except for the one point whether the person who arrives at the capital first is Uesugi Kenshin or Takeda Shingen. The person who manages to arrive first is the true winner of the battle of Kawanakajima, right?"

That Kawanakajima is a place tied into the fate of both of them, Kenshin-sama and Shingen may never part with it, Kanetsugu thought. *I happened to be present at the place where Kenshin-sama and Shingen managed a miraculous reunion and finally understand. In a sense, Kawanakajima is something like a bond between these two heroes. Though they intensely hate each other, it is proof that they lived in the same world together at the same time while fighting. The feelings of the many people killed in actions such as Takeda Nobushige are also left in that place. It cannot be thrown away so easily.*

But Hojo Ujiyasu prepared a trump card to make Shingen and Kenshin decide to advance to the capital.

Of course, the partner that she should truly be careful of was Shingen who was a pragmatic person.

If Shingen is determined, Kenshin has no choice but to decided, that ought to have been Ujiyasu's aim.

"Takeda Singen. I have received another letter for you. The sender is not Ashikaga Yoshiaki. Look well at it."

Shingen's complexion changed completely as she was quietly handed the letter.

"...Is this genuine?"

Ujiyasu was convinced that she moved Shingen's heart at last and smiled.

"Yes. It is the genuine article. In order for Takeda Shingen who thinks nothing of standing up to the authority of the Ashikaga Shogunate, this letter was necessary. I had a hard time getting it written. Well what will you do Takeda Shingen?"

"Ujiyasu. You are a woman who will do anything in order to win. You've been like that from the old days."

"There is nothing I won't do to win. In order to carry out our earnest wish of Kanto independence. Even if I suffer hundreds of losses against the invincible Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen, I will absolutely survive and make Kanto independent. Even if the capital is desolated by war, I won't move an inch, in my peaceful paradise. The dream country that Masakado Taira once tried to build. The will that I inherited from my grandfather, Hojo Suen, I will never be shaken and abandon it. I have not forgotten it. I will not in the future either. Because I am a cold woman with a heart like ice. But you seem to be different. Shingen. Will you finish your life as a country daimyo holding onto your memory of Kawanakajima? You will continue to complain about Kawanakajima where Nobushige died?"

"Do not underestimate me. I have not said any complaints so far! But now I am suddenly in an unexpected situation. Before my eyes is Uesugi Kenshin whom I never expected to have an audience with again. And this letter...."

"With this the measures I prepared are finished. I don't have any more hands. In the end you have to decide for yourself. It is your life. Takeda Shingen."

Or else can you not decide when you do not have your strategist, Kansuke Yamamoto? Ujiyasu sneered.

Shingen was about to become enraged at "this woman" but held her ground.

"A large number of people died. Kansuke, Nobushige. I want to give an answer to everyone who died. I want to inform them that their death wasn't meaningless with the way of my life. So I never look back at the dead. If I think on the dead and cry, it will be after I have

raised the Takeda's banner in Seta. It is after I let the flag of my descendants flutter. I have already decided. But I met Uesugi Kenshin again unexpectedly and was carelessly confused."

"In other words, Shingen. Uesugi Kenshin is that important to you."

Naoe Kanetsugu saw Uesugi Kenshin's shoulder suddenly shake as she sat silently.

"D, don't say such a joking thing! Uesugi Kenshin is a small bird shut in the cage called Kawanakajima. Even a dragon is not Bishamonten! But I am different. I do not need to be bound by Kawanakajima anymore. I will prove it by actions from now on."

"Oh yeah? At last, the mountain moves. It was long time."

"I was skillfully tricked by you here, Hojo Ujiyasu! Sure thing. You can do what you like in Kanto. In addition, next time you are invaded by Date Masamune I will ignore you even if you cry. I will now go to Kyoto."

"This is your last opportunity to reach Kyoto, Takeda Shingen. You are slow to act. You who continued losing important family and retainers in battle, you have acquired a bad habit of avoiding big fights that might damage your soldiers. Especially after that fierce battle of Kawanakajima. While not being conscious of it, you avoid sending your soldiers into the jaws of death. Otherwise, you should have already been able to fell that Matsudaira Motoyasu greenhorn at Mikatagahara."

"... You really are a merciless woman, Hojo Ujiyasu. It's encouraging when you are an ally, but you really are the most depressing to have as an enemy."

"Thank you for the compliment. Shingen, you are too cautious. But. There isn't a next time anymore. I will say it again. This is the last war to reach the capital."

The plan to put a crack between Oda Nobuna and her retainers is still being advanced, but if the second encircling of Oda ends in failure, the world will be subjugated by Oda Nobuna before the Oda clan fractures, this is the last chance to defeat Oda Nobuna, Ujiyasu repeated herself.

"Matsudaira Motoyasu was defeated by you in Mikatagahara before, but now may have transformed herself. There is a rumor that thousands of the vassals that left the Matsudaira clan and participated in the Honbyo Temple riots came back together." [T/N: Transformed, because Tanuki, get it?]

No problem, "Matsudaira Motoyasu" is a woman who doesn't have it in her to be cruel, that fellow cannot send her vassals to their deaths. No matter how many strong soldiers and tacticians she gathers, if she is incapable to put them to the death she can't keep them alive, Shingen laughed.

It was a savage smile like a ferocious tiger.

Naoe Kanetsugu who realized the terror of Shingen strengthened her resolution again.

Takeda Shingen. She is not a sweet person or a person who is too kind. This person, her cold-heartedness, cruelty, and intensity that will sacrifice everything for the sake of her ambition, I am afraid. Come to think of it, the Uesugi family that Kenshin-sama leads has never lost a retainer of the main house in battle. The reason is because Kenshin-sama is really gentle. She always lets herself bear the brunt of it and has managed to not lose a vassal or soldier. But the Takeda clan is the reverse. Because so far an innumerable number of chief vassals that follow Shingen have died in battle! When the time comes, Takeda Shingen can drive a retainer and their family to the death. Therefore, I am too cautious!

Kanetsugu felt like she understood the reason why Uesugi Kenshin made Takeda Shingen her arch-enemy.

The two of them are too different in personality, way of life, faith, and appearance just like oil and water.

They may have been intensely attracted because they were so different.

And.

At that time Takeda Shingen accepted the conditions of the Kou Aikoshi triple alliance and proclaimed that she would advance to the capital.

The last of Kanto's three heroes – it was time for Uesugi Kenshin to decide.

To abandon the grudge in Kawanakajima, enter a sister-in law alliance with Hojo Ujiyasu, and to destroy the Sixth Demon King Oda Nobuna will she enter a competition with Shingen to reach the capital and demonstrate justice?

Or will you demand a decisive battle in Kawanakajima again in front of Shingen who you should not have encountered again?

Naoe Kanetsugu who had followed Kenshin since the time she was a page, she was not able to predict which way Kenshin will decide.

Takeda Shingen is a Himekishu who severed her regret, sorrow, and despair that she shouldered on her back and charges toward 'the future' in the name of 'ambition'. But Kenshin does not personally have the ambition to reign over the country, on the contrary it has all been done to return everything to the time of antiquity. Though the revival of the Kanto administrator Uesugi clan was already an impossible thing, Kenshin-sama continued pushing on naively. As for Kenshin-sama, it is not 'the future', but possibly she is a lady that adheres to 'the past'. Does the ideal that Kenshin-sama looks for exist in 'the past' and not 'the future'?

In that case, she will surely be a sorrowful lady. She is so strong, a little girl with a pure heart, though she is born in this world as a mysterious unusual beauty, will Kenshin-sama be destined to live while continuing to be tied to 'the past'?

Is it possible for this Kanetsugu to free Kenshin-sama's bound heart?

Why does a person like Kenshin-sama merely live on lonesomely in 'the past'?

What is binding Kenshin-sama?

Part of it is that she was born in a body that lacked color, but it shouldn't be only that. Kenshin-sama is not the type of lady who will continue to be tied up by her own outward appearance.

There must be some bigger cause in her heart.

As for Kenshin-sama, why did you come to believe that you are Bishamonten? Why are you not a person? Why did you become a god?

There is a clue here. Kanetsugu was convinced of it.

But there was no more time to continue looking for the clue that points to the identity that tied Kenshin's heart to 'the past'.

While Kanetsugu kept thinking, *Isn't there a way to rescue Kenshin-sama?* Uesugi Kenshin made her decision.

"Takeda Shingen. I will break out of the cage called Kawanakajima now. I am going to raise an army to march to the capital and I will destroy Oda Nobuna before you. I will show Oda Nobuna that you cannot live as both a god and a person at the same time. The world after that does not matter. I will give the glory of the earth to you, a human being. Because you will never try to become a god. I will leave the last evidence that I am the incarnation of Bishamonten on this earth and then pass on."

Uesugi Kenshin completely regained her usual expression as the calm divine general.

Kanetsugu experienced the delusion that the true god took the form of a human and fell to earth.

Her readiness to destroy Oda Nobuna was strengthened, Kanetsugu was tense and held her breath.

But Takeda Shingen stared at Kenshin with such sorrowful eyes.

Kenshin, are you tired of the human world and did you feel like running to Mt. Koya and becoming a nun? It's always like that. When it becomes troublesome to live as the justice commander, you shut your heart and escape to being a nun."

"I do not run away. Passing away does not mean becoming a nun. It means that I will die. Bishamonten taught me. When I kill Oda Nobuna who is a demon king destroying the order of this country, my mission on the surface ends. Justice is carried out."

"You will die? Kenshin! Aren't you still the head of the Echigo Uesugi clan!? Do not carelessly speak of your death! You who have not lived even a single day as an ordinary human will die beautifully while playing god – I will never accept it! Without settling this with me, you will take your winnings and leave only the myth of your unrivaled invincibility!?"

Takeda Shingen – suddenly was upset.

Ta.

Naoe Kanetsugu stood in front of Shingen silently blocking her, holding her hand back.

"Who are you? This is between Kenshin and I, don't interfere."

"Shingen-sama, by any chance are you worried about Kenshin-sama?"

"That's not it. But I can't forgive this human being that poses as a god! I am always condemned for being a greedy person that lacks filial piety, but what about that fellow! That girl is an ordinary human like me! I want to show the state of things in several years to that Kenshin!"

"Please leave this to me. I will certainly find a way to release Kenshin-sama from the spell of 'the past'. I will not let Kenshin-sama return to heaven in solitude. Shingen-sama, I will surely introduce you when Kenshin-sama returns to being a 'human being'. At that time, both of you should be able to reach a conclusion and truly leave Kawanakajima."

"...Lass. Who on earth are you? You aren't a mere page."

"I am the person who inherited the spirit of justice from Kenshin-sama, Naoe Kanetsugu."

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Kanetsugu's reminiscence broke off there.

The Bishamondo door opened.

Uesugi Kenshin who gave up her hesitation and became the incarnation of Bishamonten told Naoe Kanetsugu, "I will lead the Echigo army and proceed to the capital".

The Echigo vassals that flocked to Kasugayama Castle, all of the soldiers had gathered on the plain next to the castle at the same time.

The Echigo did not have a Himekishi until Uesugi Kenshin appeared.

Thus, the main force of the Echigo army is still comprised of boorish male soldiers.

Unparalleled loyalty.

Uesugi Kenshin is worshiped as the incarnation of Bishamonten, they do not demand territory as a reward, they gave up their lives for the justice Kenshin believes in at Kawanakajima, and the soldiers continued fighting in the Kanto region.

Because they worship Uesugi Kenshin too much, there was a commander who had the ambition of making Kenshin his wife and revolted.

There was a commander that raised an objection against the constant holy war without compensation and rebelled against Kenshin too.

There was a general who had a change of heart due to Takeda Shingen's schemes.

Kenshin abandoned Echigo in anguish, and tried to run to Mt. Koya and become a nun.

But nobody doubts that the Kenshin right now is an Echigo samurai with a spirit of justice.

Unrivaled, undefeated, and selfless. The genuine god of war. Everyone there was convinced that Uesugi Kenshin-sama was the incarnation of Bishamonten.

In the past, in the past there was a man who seemed to be filled with ambition in his whole body from head to foot called Nagao Masakage in Echigo.

Nagao Masakage was the greatest political rival who fought with Uesugi Kenshin for the seat of the Echigo sovereign.

He married Kenshin's older sister, he reigned as the family head, and was second in command of the Echigo army, but still he continued defying and opposing Kenshin – Nagao Masakage had an unhealthy obsession for Kenshin vb.

“One day I will make Kenshin my wife”, he would never abandon this ambition.

To obtain Kenshin, Nagao Masakage opposed Kenshin many times and often cornered her.

Kenshin always kept permitting Nagao Masakage's rebellion and evil thoughts.

That is the way of life as Bishamonten, in addition, since her darling older sister became the wife of Nagao Masakage, it was impossible for Kenshin to murder Nagao Masakage or expel him.

It brought discord to the Echigo retainers for years, creating a lot of friction between Kenshin and the retainer groups, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Nagao Masakage was a man like a treacherous fiend.

Even if a villain ran wild and did whatever he wanted, the “Justice Commander” Kenshin will never punish him. In that case, even if she showed just a little bit of her desires that could be called selfishness, Kenshin-sama would forgive it -

That’s right. Look at Nagao Masakage. Kenshin-sama is lenient to traitors. In any case, the territory does not increase in a crusade, so it is advantageous to act selfish.

Not only the elder sister, but also the younger sister will be made his wife! Rather than be taken away by a villain like Nagao Masakage, I will marry Kenshin-sama. That way Kenshin-sama may also find happiness.

In this way, the poisonous existence called Nagao Masakage continued to spread his poison deeper among the Echigo retainers, multiplied, and became the fetters to obstruct Kenshin who was continuing the difficult wars with Takeda and Hojo.

But Nagao Masakage is not in this world anymore.

After there were innumerable victims of both friends and foes in the fourth battle of Kawanakajima, Kenshin still did not give any reward besides copper coins as ‘blood-stained commendations’.

“At this rate we will lose and die.”

“Even if it’s an order from Kenshin-sama, I can no longer stand it”.

The dissatisfaction of the Echigo army was on the brink of exploding –

Nagao Masakage who was the head of the anti-Kenshin party, used the discord to have fun sailing on the lake with Echigo’s famous tactician, Sadamitsu Usami, and they drowned together and died.

Sadamitsu Usami raised the childish Kenshin as Echigo’s first Himekishu, and as she took the seat as Echigo’s daimyo, he was the man who guarded Kenshin all the time. He was Kenshin’s confidant and her right-hand man.

The timing was too perfect and the death was suspicious.

There was a rumor that it was an assassination.

Kenshin-sama finally abandoned being the justice commander, the vassal corps was worried whether she would become a terrible dictator.

Of course, Kenshin had nothing to do with the plot to drown Nagao Masakage and Sadamitsu Usami.

Kenshin learned of the sudden death of the two of them, and was temporarily distraught, and she soon adopted the eldest daughter of Nagao Masakage and her real older sister Aya as her own daughter, and gave her the name Uesugi Kagekatsu.

To the child of that Nagao Masakage who tormented Kenshin during his lifetime, she let her succeed her, let her inherit the Uesugi house, let her inherit the position of Echigo shugo, it was declared.

Nagao Masakage who was born in the branch family and had been discriminated against had always held an inferiority complex towards the head of the clan Kenshin who had the family status and bloodline, and he struggled to obtain the seat of the Echigo shugo even if he failed countless times. Kenshin had the best family status in Echigo/Kanto, after having taken office as the Kanto kanrei following succeeding the name of the “Uesugi clan”, his inferiority complex and earnest desire for Kenshin became even more intense.

The thing that Nagao Masakage wanted to that extent, his child was given it easily.

Kenshin truly promised a ‘life of celibacy’ as Bishamonten, abandoned herself and strove for justice, everyone in the Echigo vassal corps shed tears and believed in her. That belief soon turned into faith, all of Kenshin’s orders that came from hearing the “voice of god” were carried out by the Echigo army without question.

The Uesugi clan, the Echigo army doesn’t have a war council.

Kenshin personally hears the voice of Bishamonten, and gives her orders to the vassal corps.

“Honjo Shinenaga. Hojo Takahiro. Nagazane Irobe. Saito Asanobu. Oni Kojima Yataro.”

Kenshin rode on horseback in front of the large battalion that was standing in a line, while calling out the name of each military commander, and waved her bamboo staff to cut the army corps into each unit.

By obeying the commands that Kenshin had seemingly only gives by intuition, the Echigo army becomes the strongest army by following no set rules.

Nobody makes any objections.

All of the members shook with emotion. “Kenshin-sama has finally stood up to destroy the ruler of the world Oda Nobuna.”

“Generals. I promised that I wouldn’t invade other countries like Takeda Shingen and until now I have ordered my generals to engage in a crusade without compensation, but we must suppress the Hokuriku area for the sake of a decisive battle with Oda Nobuna. Therefore, from here we will capture Echchu and Noto. I will entrust the two subjugated countries to Saito Asanobu, I will invade and immediately attack Echizen from Kaga and sweep away Shibata Katsuie’s army, and we will charge straight to Oomi and destroy Oda Nobuna. Hojo and Takeda are now no longer rivals, but allies. With the decisive battle with Oda ahead of us, we will not dispatch any soldiers to Kawanakajima and the Kanto area.”

Until now the numerous crusades of the Echigo army had gone without rewards, to bet the whole world on this decisive battle, the Echigo samurais made a stir.

“The vice-captain will be Naoe Kanetsugu. When I am absent, obey the commands of Naoe Kanetsugu. If I lose my life when proceeding to the capital, make my adopted daughter Uesugi Kagekatsu the head of the Echigo army. Even if I disappear, carry out the charge to the capital by any means, and devote yourself to the Yamato Gosho and the shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiaki. Even if I enter the capital, do not bring chaos like Yoshinaka Minamoto. When your evil thoughts are revived, remember my form. Bishamonten’s eyes always watch you. Show the justice of the Echigo army to all of Japan.”

All of the people were surprised by the ominous words, Kenshin-sama will bet everything on this fight, they nodded to each other.

As for our old enemy, Takeda Shingen, she will establish an army to invade the capital, and the one that arrives at the capital earlier will become the administrator of the Kanto area and reign over the whole country.

Kenshin-sama will reign over the whole world!

You must not fall behind Takeda Shingen!

We will settle Kawanakajima with this!

The Echigo samurai waited for the words that Kenshin would speak when taking the field.

The word of god.

It is the voice of the god of war Bishamonten that Nagao Masakage longed for and couldn’t stop being obsessed with.

“Fate dwells in heaven. Armor is in your chest. Deeds rest at your feet.”

Kenshin chanted.

She became the incarnation of the Bishamonten in mind and body, when faced with destiny Kenshin recited these words.

Words to rally the courage of the common soldiers and her many generals.

“Engage in combat fully determined to die and you will be alive; wish to survive in the battle and you will surely meet death.”

The army roared at once like one creature.

Oh, oh oh!

Oh, oh oh!

The flag of ‘Bishamondo’, and then the flag of ‘The Dragon’ were raised all at once.

Kenshin ran forward as a lone horseman.

The strongest army of the Sengoku Era, the Echigo army, followed after her.

While shining with a crest of ‘love’, to Kenshin’s older sister Aya – when her husband was drowned she became a priest, and introduces herself as ‘Senmomoin’ now – Kanetsugu lowered her head saying “I will go.”

“Kanetsugu. This morning Kenshin said her final farewell. Bishamonten’s ‘voice’ told her fate.”

“Senmomoin-sama. This Kanetsugu will look after Kenshin-sama without exception, and we will return to Echigo.”

“You’ve changed, Kanetsugu. Just a little while ago you worshipped Kenshin as a real god.”

“Yes. When I met with Takeda Shingen at the Tsurugaoka Hachiman shrine I had a glimpse of Kenshin-sama disturbed by intense feelings of love and hatred, it was the real Kenshin-sama. I thought then. With eyes like Oushuu’s Botenmaru who descends from a Namban person, the image of Kenshin-sama overlaps with her. I should have noticed earlier. I may have been blinded by Kenshin-sama’s strength and beauty that transcends human knowledge.”

Senmomoin said while looking at the galloping Kenshin.

“I felt sorry for that child who had been born with white skin like snow and a body that was so weak. Her skin is burnt just being in contact with the sun and she is blinded. Her heart is damaged when she repeatedly works too hard. There were few things she could eat. She has to take her nourishment by drinking. She is a woman so she gets a fever once a month, and

movement becomes impossible. That child always lived while being possessed by the shadow of death. The voice of Bishamonten is the voice of Kenshin's heart. I think that child foresees that her body is reaching its limits."

"No. Kenshin-sama's body isn't yet at its limit. It's her heart that is really at the limit. Kenshin-sama has constantly been losing important people one after another to live as Bishamonten."

"Yeah. That child once said that if one worshipped God, they will not die. She has stubbornly refused the courtship of men. Because Kenshin's character is like this, she burned with passion unable to forgive Oda Nobuna who has the power of a god and the love of a human."

"On the day when Kenshin-sama is free, she wouldn't be able to live as a human girl. I have never seen a person as lonely as her. Loneliness torments Kenshin's body and mind. Living as the incarnation of Bishamonten any more than this..."

"As expected of the Himekishi that Kenshin approved as her successor. Two men protected, raised, and supported Kenshin. The strategist who discovered you, Sadamitsu Usami, and the Prime Minister Naoe Yamato that raised Naoe Kanetsugu as a daughter. You are the last present left by those two people for Kenshin who has no choice but to live as the lonely Bishamonten. For Kenshin, please."

Kanetsugu nodded silently.

In any case, we must overcome Oda Nobuna – we have to win this battle, for the future of Kenshin and Echigo.

But I can't save Kenshin from her fate only by winning.

I said to Senmomoin that "Kenshin's body wasn't at its limit yet", but the mind and body are two sides of the same coin, Kanetsugu knew.

Kenshin's intense force of will that could be called an abnormality, it had a huge impact on Kenshin's body. For example, when believing that Bishamonten exists, she can really hear the voice of Bishamonten.

Or it can be said that Kenshin's weak, sensitive body tended to be affected by her extreme spirit.

Perhaps at the moment that Kenshin-sama was convinced that "the time has come for Bishamonten to return to heaven", she felt that her "destiny has been fulfilled", and after tirelessly continuing to dispatch troops and repeatedly pushing herself without rest Kenshin-sama's body reached its limit.

Usami. Father. Please lend me strength. Your wisdom. Naoe Kanetsugu pursued Kenshin while praying.

“The Oyashirazu mountain pass to enter Ecchu is dangerous! Don’t run alone, Kenshin-sama!”

I was able to catch up to Kenshin.

While looking at the Sea of Echigo from horseback, Kenshin asked Kanetsugu.

“Kanetsugu. You personally chose the crest of love after an exchange through battle with Botenmaru. What is love?”

I was taught all about justice and compassion from the tactician Sadamitsu Usami and prime minister, Naoe Yamato, but I still don’t know what the thing called love is.

“When the Amano-Iwato was opened, why did Oda Nobuna and Sagara Yoshiharu kiss, why didn’t they hide their love knowing it was a path to ruin, I can’t understand. Before the decisive battle with Oda Nobuna, only this one mystery still remains to be solved. Why did I get so angry at Oda Nobuna like this...because Takeda Shingen was told significant words when she encountered Sagara Yoshiharu, I entered the tea house in Kyoto. But Sagara Yoshiharu was an ordinary boy. Although he seemed extremely kind, he was just an ordinary human man. I don’t understand why Shingen and Oda Nobuna are so obsessed with Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“Kenshin-sama. In the world of humans, if you don’t associate with human beings directly, you won’t be able to understand.”

“But. I already encountered Sagara Yoshiharu. I conversed.”

“If you had a trivial discussion in a tea house just once, it isn’t possible to understand the other party.”

“...Kanetsugu. Once I enter Ecchu, I want to go ahead and scout out the structure of the Azuchi castle. I can defeat Shibata Katsuie. The decisive battle will possibly be Azuchi Castle. It is said to be an impregnable castle equal to Odawara Castle.”

“By all means Kenshin-sama you may go to Azuchi yourself. But a long absence will delay our progress on the strategy to invade the capital, and the condition of your body will worsen, too. Spend just one day freely in Azuchi, and then please return to headquarters. This Kanetsugu will go to Azuchi to receive you.”

“It’s okay Kanetsugu? When I said that I would go, I thought you would say it was dangerous and stop me.”

“I realized in the battle with Botenmaru, that I am inferior at war. I don’t even come up to Kenshin-sama’s feet in ability. But Kenshin-sama should personally look at Azuchi Castle in the

face of danger. Besides, Oda Nobuna and Sagara Yoshiharu should participate in the festival held for completing Azuchi Castle.”

“Festival?”

“Yes. A festival unveiling the completed Azuchi Castle, it also seems to cover the O-bon festival. It is said that any kind of person is allowed to enter the Azuchi town freely.”

“The O-bon festival. The festival to send the souls of the dead who have returned to earth back to heaven again.”

Chapter 2 – Let's go to Azuchi Castle!

“Sagara Yoshiharu? We can get there immediately if we go from Nagahama to Azuchi by ship? It would take all day by ox cart.”

“Yes. Azuchi castle was built on the shore of Lake Biwa. Nagahama Castle, Omizo castle, and Sakamoto castle are connected by a ferry service. By using the waterway between Azuchi castle and Kyoto it is less than one day. This is the linchpin of the Oda army's blitzkrieg tactics.”

“Oh, is that the seven storied castle tower I have heard rumors about? The tall building at the summit of Mt. Azuchi. How was it made?”

The morning of the O-bon Festival.

Sagara Yoshiharu had been rushed to Azuchi castle by Imagawa Yoshimoto.

When it was announced that Azuchi castle had finally been completed, tourists rushed over from all over the country, the castle town showed a great turnout.

Azuchi castle, to substitute for Gifu castle, Oda Nobuna's new castle.

It is in the important position on Mt. Azuchi which towers over the southern coast of Ōmi's Lake Biwa, Nobuna poured all of the efforts of the Oda clan into building it and even incorporated 'stone walls', thus it became a huge fortress.

The castle tower that stretched seven stories from the mountain top was an unprecedented building that overturned Japan's common sense.

The castle town that spread out from the foot of the mountain was constructed to clearly reflect Nobuna's sense of beauty.

Not even one piece of garbage fell onto the wide main street, trees were maintained on both sides of the road, it was more beautiful than the capital, Kyoto.

But the tourists who wanted to see the world's greatest castle, Azuchi castle, and get a glimpse of the ruler of the country, Oda Nobuna, gathered only on this day. The merchants who were expecting visitors were flooded all at once, and the main street was so crowded that it was difficult to walk.

At any rate they were free to do business since the town of Azuchi had a free-market policy.

“Thank you very much! Everyone gather! The specialty of Sakai, Imai Soukyu’s famous fried takoyaki! As a sign of goodwill we are now selling it at a bargain price! You wanna try and sell it back at your hometown, right? Come try it now! I will even give you a discount!”

“Fufu. Sakai’s pioneer miso takoyaki. Everyone, please don’t forget about Tsuda Sougyu’s miso takoyaki. Please do not get rid of it. Uuu, how on earth can I recoup the money I wasted on Mitsuhide-sama’s miso takoyaki....takoyaki doesn’t need miso!”

Yoshiharu found the takoyaki stands that were lined up side by side and groaned. Isn’t that Imai-ossan and Tsuda-ossan? To rush from Sakai on this fine day and work hard without faltering, as expected of a Sakai merchant.

But, you can always hire someone to do this sort of thing. Why are the bosses themselves selling the takoyaki? Are they skimping on labor costs? As expected from Sakai merchants.

“This is fun. I want to eat that ‘Sakai specialty deep-fried takoyaki!’”

“It looks to be hard to reach the stand. Yoshimoto-chan, take off your ceremonial dress. It is being stepped on by tourists.”

“Oh dear oh dear. You want to see me naked? You may take it off. But somewhere without other people. D. Ea. R.”

“That’s not what I meant!”

Yoshiharu took Yoshimoto’s hand, and struggled to somehow advance through the crowd.

Oh, it’s Sagara Yoshiharu! It’s the monkey that aims for the world’s most beautiful woman! It really is a monkey face! The children from around the country pointed at Yoshiharu and rushed over.

“Oh no! It’s because my face is widely known nationwide. Run away Yoshimoto-chan!”

“Oh dear. Because I have come to Azuchi to expressly flaunt our newly-wed status, you do not need to escape.”

Across the street, in the space that became vacant, a strange costume stood.

The image seemed to be one of the large catfish caught in Lake Biwa, it could be said that the model is rather strange, or rather that the design is wrong, and it could only be seen as an evil deity that crawled out from the bottom of Lake Biwa.

It was tottering unsteadily, the reason being that the head of the catfish is too large and can’t be balanced.

“Azuchi’s local mascot, the master of the bottom of the lake that ruled Lake Biwa for 1000 years, ‘Azutsuchi’! Everybody, when seeing the faces of young girls my life span is extended by twenty years! But a man can’t recklessly approach a young lady! Curses!”

The children changed the target of their attacks from Yoshiharu to Azutsuchi. “It’s an evil god! The evil spirit of Lake Biwa! Defeat it, defeat it!” Azutsuchi received an all-out attack. “Iya, stop it!” A somewhat familiar voice was raised and he wielded the the catfish whiskers, and began a childish battle with the kids.”

I gave the advice to prepare a mascot in order to revitalize the town, but the design of the stuffed toy was pointless. As for a mascot, the design is key. While Yoshiharu sighed that he didn’t have the budget to hire the greatest painters, Kano Eitoku and Tohaku Hasegawa, he took advantage of the situation to break away from the child corps while holding Yoshimoto’s shoulder.

“Give it up you kids! Because when this catfish whisker turns round and round, a huge earthquake will come to Omi! These seven catfish whiskers are linked to the trumpets of the Apocalypse! Buon, buon!”

Bontenmaru and the evil god seem to speak the same language, Yoshiharu thought.

He finally entered an alley that almost none of the tourists knew existed and caught his breath.

He found a teahouse and rest stop and sat down with Yoshimoto.

“Wow, it’s incredible. Everywhere is filled with entertainers and food stands. It feels like I came to Tokyo Disneyland. Because I didn’t have a girlfriend in high-school, I never went there.”

“Oh Sagara Yoshiharu. What is this ‘top gyo disc knee land’? It sounds like something fearful.”

“The people of the Sengoku Era are especially eager to use ominous characters to name things. Why is that?”

“Isn’t it because the people’s hearts have been ruined by the constant wars. In Mikawa, ‘Withdraw from this impure world and earnestly seek rebirth in paradise’ dark words like that are popular.”

“I don’t understand the meaning of the words but just hearing it makes me depressed!”

“Ohohoho. The continually troubled Motoyasu-san seems to like it strangely.”

“If she makes one wrong move, she’ll become a spray painting delinquent. By the way, will you take off your ceremonial dress?”

“Now now. I have not finished drinking my tea yet, you wolfed it down. Have you come to desire my body so badly? This embarrassing man.”

“That’s not it! If someone steps on it while you are wearing it, wouldn’t it be dangerous?”

“A festival, both the feeling of love and passions mysteriously swell. But for a wedding night it’s that thing called the ‘first night.’ When the day ends two people are bound together. Endure it until the evening, D. Ea. R.”

“Because Nobuna and Juubei-chan would certainly come to kill, that’s a little... Juubei-chan will use her pistol before you know it, it’s dangerous.”

“Not to mention Nobuna-san, but for Mitsuhide-san to fall in love with Sagara Yoshiharu, it’s becoming serious. Both of them are almost equal in looks, resourcefulness, and ambitions, they won’t yield to each other? As expected of Sagara Yoshiharu, the greatest man in the world that I acknowledged!”

“Almost equal...so they aren’t completely equal?”

“Yes. For better or worse Nobuna-san is vulnerable to all kinds of attacks, however she isn’t afraid of anything. To do that suicide attack on my base in Okehazama, it is impossible without the nerves of a true Himekishi. On that point, Mitsuhide-san has a weak point, and is slightly inferior.”

“Juubei-chan’s weak point? There was something like that? She is gullible and easily deceived by magic? Possibly a thin chest?”

“From her childhood Mitsuhide-san has been loved by her mother, and it seems she was entrusted the dream called the ‘Akechi clan revival’ by her mother. I have a feeling that that will become a burden for Mitsuhide-san soon. Conversely because Nobuna-san is at odds with her mother, she is a person who can live her whole life as she likes. Human beings are mysterious. Luck can be a burden and misfortune can become the way to freedom.”

“...I see.....that reminds me, is Juubei-chan’s mother ill? If there’s a chance should I go visit her?”

“Ah. Alright, but. Right after you went, you might be forced to get married to Juubei-san right then and there?”

“...what should I do....”

Even so, the response to the festival unveiling Azuchi castle is beyond imagination, the new tourists are thronging every which way one after another while we are resting in the tea house.

Azuchi can be called the center of Japan geographically. Owari and Ise are tied together by the Tokaido (Edo-Kyoto highway), the Nakasendo (Higashiyama Road) extends from Mino, the Hokuriku road which is connected to Echizen, all three highways which represent the eastern countries are close to Azuchi. Furthermore, Sakai and Kyoto are immediately to the west, Nobuna made a round trip to Kyoto and Azuchi in a day using the waterways.

It's closer to the capital than Gifu Castle, and it is at a position blocking up the Hokuriku road which is used by Uesugi Kenshin to invade the capital.

As for the viewpoint of Nobuna who built this big castle on this territory as a replacement for Gifu castle, there was only one thing that Yoshiharu didn't understand.

“From the west, Mori, Uesugi Kenshin from Hokuriku, and at the time that Takeda Shingen is building up soldiers to invade Kyoto from the east, why does Nobuna remain at Azuchi castle and hold such a festival?”

“Ohohoho. Because the Oda clan may soon be done for, if you suddenly do something so showy doesn't it seem like the end!”

“Ehhhh? That's a joke isn't it, Yoshimoto-chan?”

“Of course it's a joke. Because it's Nobuna-san, even though it seems like having this festival debuting Azuchi Castle might appear to be careless at first glance, there is a meaning.”

“What kind of meaning? Because it is coinciding right with the O-bon festival, there is a profitable sense to hold a festival. My head doesn't understand more than that.”

“Sniffle. As to that, as I am Yoshiharu-san's strategist I will explain on behalf of Nobuna-sama.”

Suddenly.

The tactician Takenaka Hanbei sat next to Yoshiharu.

“Hanbei? Where were you? Won't your body get hurt being pushed around in the crowd? You could even catch a cold.”

“I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I was ordered by Nobuna-sama to never leave Yoshimoto-sama and Yoshiharu alone together, so I chased after you secretly and anticipated that you would enter

a tea house in a relatively less crowded alley. Probably because Yoshimoto-sama's ceremonial dress would be a hindrance walking in this crowd, you would temporarily move to a less popular place and change into a lighter outfit."

"Oh my. As expected of the best strategist in the world. Splendid. Where is the other strategist, KuroKan?"

"Ka, Kanbei-san said, *"Mufu. Sagara Yoshiharu will certainly stop by the seminary first! His aim of course will be Frois's breasts! This game is Simeon's victory! Ahahaha!"* She left that message and is waiting in the seminary." [T/N: a college that prepares students to be priests, ministers, or rabbis. I learned a new word today~]

"Sorry Kanbei. Yoshimoto-chan's breasts are enough...."

At about this time the 'First-class KuroKan' will be depressed at the seminary sob sob, Hanbei sobbed.

"Yoshiharu-san. Of course Nobuna-sama didn't host the festival today just to play around. People are gathered from across the nation, by spreading the news that the huge castle that rivals Odawara Castle was completed in Azuchi, the many generals encircling the Oda clan – Uesugi Kenshin-sama, Takeda Shingen-sama, and Mori-sama, are being guided in the direction that Nobuna-sama wants."

"So that means?"

"If these three parties act as one and attack at the same time with all of their power, there is no way to stop it. However, in every human being there are some habits to their thinking. We can lead them to some extent by exploiting those thinking habits."

Hanbei didn't hear the intention of the Azuchi Castle festival from Nobuna directly, but she was able to accurately figure out Nobuna's designs.

"Kai's Takeda Shingen-sama is a person who is slow to act. Today, many of Kai's hooligans will be entering Azuchi in the appearance of tourists. When Shingen hears about the majesty of the stone walled fortress, Azuchi castle, that towers on the mountain top next to Lake Biwa, because of her personality that avoids losing soldiers by pushing too hard, she can't help but be careful. Shingen-sama has experienced attacking Odawara Castle. She knows that it isn't easy to take a big castle even if she makes a forced expedition. Because the food supplies won't continue even if you have the number of soldiers necessary to siege a big castle. Therefore even if it is a detour, it is expected that she will destroy Totomi and Matsudaira Motoyasu-sama's Mikawa so that she can stabilize a foothold. Because Shingen-sama is a person who sticks by "results" in a battle. It's too bad for Motoyasu-sama, but we can gain a little time."

"Is that so? So among today's tourists there are a lot of country's delinquents mixed into the crowd? I have to be careful of assassination."

“On the other hand, Uesugi Kenshin-sama of Echigo, seeing Nobuna-sama absorbed in merry making today as if nothing happened after she declared war, she will be enraged. In addition, from her history of abandoning the attack on Odawara castle in the middle of her Kanto expedition in the past, Kenshin-sama seems to be a warrior that hates the wars of attrition called sieges will think, “I won’t surrender next time” and will try to avenge her past loss. She has a habit of obstinately repeating things that previously obstructed her. You could say she has a personality that drag the past along. In other words, Kenshin-sama will be provoked by the form of Azuchi castle and will hurry even more to invade the capital. In this way Nobuna-sama adjusted the marching speed of Takeda and Uesugi, she intends to bring about a time lag and we can defend them one by one with all of our strength.”

“That’s amazing. It’s all gibberish to me.”

“You could say that it is expected of Nobuna. Hanbei, what about Mori?”

“Yes. Mori is the difficult one. There are two command structures in the Mori clan. The younger sister Kobayakawa Takakage-sama commands the San’yo district route, while the older sister Kikkawa Motoharu-sama commands the San’in district route. Kobayakawa-sama is a prudent person, but Kobayakawa-sama is great at assaults. The two of them are twins, but they have opposite personalities. Probably the two of them will have completely opposite views in regards to the completion of Azuchi castle.”

Is that so? Kobayakawa-san is Nobuna’s enemy....Yoshiharu’s heart ached.

“Kobayakawa-sama will become increasingly careful, and Kikkawa-sama will yell to charge ahead more and more. Thus the San’yo and Sani’n forces should fall out of step.....”

“...Kobayakawa-san and Kikkawa-san won’t fall out of step. Though their characters are truly opposite, the two of them are bound together in a solid bond that nobody can separate.”

“That’s right. Nobuna-sama and I can’t read which strategy will be employed this time. It is difficult. If the San’yo army advances they will aim at the Himeji Castle of Harima again, and they will advance from Tajima to Tanba if the San’in army marches.”

“Tajima? Shikanosuke should be well-acquainted with the San’in region. Her hometown is in Izumo.”

In any case, if you can regulate the advance speed of the Uesugi and Takeda than the Oda house can survive the first round, we must certainly avoid defending against both of them at once by any means, since the Oda army is full of weak soldiers. We can only place our treasured gun corps in either war front. There is no way to win when against a two pronged attack from the Sengoku Era’s strongest Uesugi and Takeda, Hanbei summed it up.

“I served the Mori clan for six months, I think Mori will come from the San’in district. San’yo would probably need the veteran general Ukita Naoie. Because she doesn’t know when he will betray her again, Kobayakawa-san in San’yo can’t help but become careful.”

“If Yoshiharu-san says so, it seems that will be how it happens. But will Ukita betray again? I think that if he betrays again the Mori clan will get rid of him, sob sob.”

“No. I don’t think there is anyone in this world that can murder Ukita-ossan. It would be impossible even for Mori Motonari. Besides, it would be hard to bear the full brunt of the battlefield.”

“He is the most troublesome if you make him an enemy, but when you make him an ally he is unreliable and you can’t rely on him. He is a troublesome person. Sniff.”

“It will be bad if we don’t subjugate Tanba that has become the entrance to San’in soon. Juubei-chan is commanding the Tanba district army, but the Tanba attack stopped midway because she continued helping in the Harima offensive and defensive battles and the Honbyo Temple war.”

“Yes. Juubei-san is a little too generous and threw away her own achievements to help Yoshiharu-san and Nobuna-sama. Her virtue has created an unfavorable situation this time.”

“Such talk should be left for tomorrow. Why don’t you drink your tea?” Yoshimoto leaned against Yoshiharu.

BAM.

The tea set that Yoshimoto had in her hand was scattered and broke into powder as it was shot by a bullet.

“Who is an easy mark!? I am not! Senpai is weak and will almost die as soon as I take my eyes off of him, and if Juubei doesn’t help, Nobuna-sama will become weak and and will burst into tears!”

The criminal was Akechi Juubei Mitsuhide.

She used her pistol before they knew it.

Her skill has really become top-notch.

“My my. My precious tea set...what a waste.”

“UUUEEEEE!? I’m going to be bullied!”

“Juubei-chan? Why are you here? Did you leave Nobuna alone?”

“I received a new order from Nobuna-sama. Until when are you going to be playing with Yoshimoto Saru, I am to bring Sagara Yoshiharu quickly to Azuchi castle. If Senpai refuses, I seem to be allowed to shoot you to death.”

“But before when it was in the middle of construction I already climbed the castle tower!?”

“Nobuna-sama yelled angrily and told me to return to show the completed Azuchi Castle to Senpai. Along with the castle tower, all of the palaces in the inner court have been finished. Even the castle tower didn’t have its interior decorating before. Don’t worry just come!”

“Don’t you need to return to the Tanba front?”

“Not to worry, after I finish guiding Senpai with Nobuna-sama, I’ll return tomorrow morning.”

The present Yoshiharu that had been confessed to by Mitsuhide, didn’t know how to deal with her.

The reason that he had to take part in a fake wedding with Imagawa Yoshimoto was because he got stuck in a sticky situation torn between Mitsuhide and Nobuna.

Anyway, it is difficult to avoid the “fate” for both Mitsuhide and Nobuna, I strongly feel that the “Honnoji Temple incident” is quickly approaching.

She hadn’t been informed of the name of the criminal, but Hanbei who was confided to by Yoshiharu of the future in which the ‘Honnoji Temple Incident’ occurs, became close to tears saying “I’m worried.”

(Yoshiharu-san. As expected, the criminal of the Honnoji incident is...)

(No Hanbei, fate hasn’t been decided. If I brand Juubei as the criminal now, her fate will be determined.)

(That’s right. But I think she is going to have be watched closely as an important suspect in the future. Is that moment approaching now that Azuchi castle has been completed?)

(Yes. From the completion of Azuchi Castle to the Honnoji Temple incident, it shouldn’t be more than two years. Furthermore, this world is advancing faster than the history I know. Is it because the Honbyo Temple battle which should have taken ten years was brought to an end in a short period?)

(So it won’t be strange if it occurs tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow. Sob, sob.)

While Hanbei and Yoshiharu were having a conversation with their gazes, Mitsuhide brandished her pistol. “I’m getting sick and tired of Nobuna-sama’s indecisiveness. If she holds a magnificent wedding I’ll fight with Senpai against all of the powerful local families of the whole country, if Senpai is abandoned he should be given to this noble Juubei, either way she should choose. Why you are now getting married to Imagawa Yoshimoto...nothing is settled even if you prolong the situation in this way. You should quickly completely finish it.” She muttered to herself dissatisfied.

(Hiiii. She is about to explode, Yoshiharu-san. Sob, sob.)

(Seeing Yoshimoto-chan flirting with me has made Juubei-chan’s displeasure gauge has increased to MAX! What on earth should I do!?)

(Putting aside Nobuna-sama, because Mitsuhide-san is a lady who can’t tell the difference between a fake and real, this wedding doesn’t seem to be good for the stability of Mitsuhide-san’s heart! I’m sorry, I’m sorry!)

(No, it’s a consequence of the fact that I served the Mori clan, and was about to enter a romantic relationship with Kobayakawa-san! Juubei-chan’s heart lost all its restraints with that!)

(Since Yoshiharu is changing the structure of the world, you can become a polygamist! In that case, I can too....no, nothing. Sob, sob.)

(Polygamy is impossible in the world where Himekishis lead the soldiers and fight to take over the country! And, this is just mind numbingly exhausting, I can’t do that!)

While Yoshiharu and Hanbei were in great distress and shaking, only Imagawa Yoshimoto who doesn’t know the complicated circumstances had a nonchalant air.

“Just right. It is a good opportunity to show all the people in the world that I am Sagara Yoshiharu’s legal wife. Then let’s go everybody! Please, Mitsuhide-san.”

“Let’s go, Senpai. Why are you and Hanbei embracing each other and trembling? It was just a pistol shot, aren’t you still the peerless Sagara Yoshiharu? It can’t be helped.”

Mitsuhide who pulled on Yoshimoto’s sleeve showed a fascinating smile.

It’s alright. While she has a cheerful smile for me, Juubei-chan’s heart is still strong and hasn’t fallen into darkness, the Honnoji incident flag hasn’t be triggered yet, Yoshiharu was relieved.

(But Juubei-chan has the matter of her mother’s illness and the Tanba assault isn’t advancing and she is becoming considerably emotionally unstable. That is certain. Until now I have been helped tremendously by Juubei-chan. I want to support her at such a time....it’s difficult to decide what kind of attitude I should adopt after being confessed to by her.)

When he entered the service of the Mori clan, I should have been taught what to do in a time like this by Ukita Naoie-ossan, Yoshiharu thought.

Because I only had eyes for Kobayakawa-san in those days when I lost all my memories about the Oda clan, there wasn't an expectation that this would happen.

(Goemon. You always said. It is difficult to pick up all the fruits....)

Yoshimoto whispered into Yoshiharu's ear secretly.

"Such a bitter face doesn't suit you, Sagara Yoshiharu. This battle, if it's love troubles that you are worried about, leave it to me."

"Everyone has come from all of the various countries of Japan have they not!? In today's Azuchi, put aside rank! This Nobuna-sama will receive your money directly! The viewing charge is 100 kan!"

The one who reigns over the whole country, Oda Nobuna, was in a great mood standing on the bridge built over the Mizubori that divided Mount Azuchi and the castle towns, and was pleasantly waving her hand to the large number of tourists who gathered from all around the country.

She wore the scarlet velvet mantle that she obtained from Portugal, and had her prided Namban hat which she got from Frois on her head. Her outfit made you know that the person was Oda Nobuna even if seen from a far distance. Moreover because she was in a defenseless state with only one page attending to her, Yoshiharu's heart was about to stop for a moment when he found Nobuna.

It wasn't only Yoshiharu whose heart was about to stop.

"It's, it's, it's the genuine Oda Nobuna! Howaaa!"

"Such a beautiful face! The beautiful woman who appeared in the heavens that time when the Amano-Iwato was opened is now here before my eyes!"

"Owaaa! Her appearance really is like a celestial maiden!"

"A perfect beauty. The goddess that saves the country. There she is, there she is."

"No good. It's no good~. Oda Nobuna-sama can never belong to a single person. I thank the gods for the bastard Sagara Yoshiharu snatching away that airhead shogun.~"

When the Amano-Iwato was opened, their hearts were fascinated by Nobuna's beauty that was projected on the heavens. "You can go meet Nobuna-sama if you go to Azuchi Castle!" When they heard that, men from all over Japan (mostly unmarried) gathered to worship the

genuine live Oda Nobuna for the first time, they were choked with tears of gratitude and prostrated themselves right there.

As for Yoshiharu, *are you so moved because you don't know the person?*, he was a little surprised. If you think about it, Oda Nobuna published Tenka Fubu for them, and fought it out with Takeda Shingen and Honbyo Temple for them and became the “ruler of the whole country”.

When I met Nobuna for the first time, she was still Owari's foolish princess, and she was a person who could be mistaken for one of Nagoya city's delinquents. But the present Nobuna subjugated most of the capital, and built the greatest castle in the world in Azuchi. On top of that, she has refined her Namban style fashion sense. You could say that her beauty has been multiplied by ten times since the days of Owari when she seemed like a wild monkey, she has the charisma of a leader that attracts people.

“Nobuna also grew up completely”, Yoshiharu was engrossed in his deep emotions-

“Hehehe. A good feeling is swelling up. Look everybody. Give me 100 kan quickly. If you pay me 100 kan right now, you can shake hands with me.”

“Huuuh!?”

“With Nobuna-sama?”

“A handshake?”

“Uooooo!”

“Nobuna! Nobuna! Nobuna!”

“I'll pay 500 kan!”

“Me too!”

“If I can shake hands, I'll sell off all of father's fields and donate them to Nobuna-sama uuuooo!”

“I'll donate all of my shop's fortunes to spend a night together!”

“UOAAAAAAAAA”

“Me first!”

“No, I was the first to arrive!”

“I will throw anyone that tries to cut in line to Thailand! CHESTOOOOOO!”

Because Nobuna got caught up in the moment and incited the tourists, the color of the men's eyes changed and they began to run wild and start a fight, and the entrance to the major road became a riot.

Splash.

Splash.

One person after another the men who were competing to be the first to shake the hand of the celestial maiden on the bridge began falling into the moat.

Oh dear. Nobuna sneakily put on gloves, if a handshake meeting is held with gloves it would be a taboo, but I guess it is an unscrupulous business, Yoshiharu was shocked. Yoshiharu surely witnessed the historic moment when the "idol" of the Sengoku Era was changed from the Honbyo Temple cat ear army to Oda Nobuna.

While the page was organizing the tourists that had rushed at Nobuna and were falling over like dominos, Nobuna noticed Yoshiharu's group and beckoned them over.

"Yoshiharu. You are late! Juubei and Hanbei were brought as well. Wait a minute Yoshiharu. You weren't affected by today's festive mood, and wouldn't do something vulgar like taking off Yoshimoto's kimono right?"

"Shh! Shh! Don't call my name in front of the guys who are in a frenzy! I'll be sacrificed! Because you are now known as having the highest personality among Sengoku Era bachelors!"

"Hahaha. You who were so slow-witted now know who the most beautiful girl in the world is too? Doya!"

"Yeah, yeah. The greatest, the greatest. Beautiful girl, beautiful girl. Lovely, lovely. Saying that, the effect of the Amano-Iwato was tremendous. Because it showed something like a movie starring you to all of Japan. The Amano-Iwato was amazingly effective at advertising."

"Hmm. You don't need to be embarrassed now. Come Yoshiharu. Also Juubei, Hanbei, and Yoshimoto. I've been preparing for the Azuchi Castle completion ceremony from morning to night, but you have special treatment. The only one in Azuchi Castle is just this Nobuna, I'll guide you to the inner citadel of Azuchi Castle!"

Yoshimoto said "That's good" and smiled thoughtlessly.

"Nobuna-sama. Even now the second Oda encirclement is advancing."

“It’s alright Juubei. Because we might perish tomorrow anyways, today I’ll treat you to a feast! Yoshiharu also came back to the Oda clan, I’m suddenly getting excited!”

“Only today? Juubei will return to Tanba tomorrow morning. I will resume the attack on Tanba to check Mori’s advance right? I have to suppress Tanba and Tajima before Mori, Kyoto will then be removed from the San’in route.”

“That talk is for tomorrow! Because today is a festival! Juubei is too stiff!”

“Sniff, sniff. I, I, I can come too?”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. Oh Hanbei, where is Harima? You are always together.”

“Kanbei-san misread the situation a bit, and is in the seminary.”

“And Hanbei wins more fame. Harima seems to have been completely born under a second star. Now, everybody. Let’s go to the inner citadel! First we will cross the bridge and climb the main road!”

Yoshiharu, Nobuna, Yoshimoto, Juubei, Hanbei – with the four Himekishis that represent the Sengoku Era, he began to climb the stone stairs leading to the castle gate.

Nobuna made all of Mt. Azuchi which protrudes from Lake Biwa into a fortress.

Although most of the parts of the mountain that were covered in dense trees were left alone, a huge castle gate to the inner citadel was built by cutting directly into the mountain and was made of stone. Then a residence for each of the retainer groups was built into the mansion.

“Yoshiharu. Your residence was completed as well.”

“Senpai’s residence, it’s an unprecedented size for a home for one retainer. It is because your younger sisters have multiplied.”

While Yoshiharu was absent, Yoshiharu’s younger sister Nene gathered many new sisters-in-law for Yoshiharu who became the family of the Sagara clan.

Sakichi Ishida, Otani Kinosuke, Fukushima Ichimatsu, Toranosuke Kato and others.

All of them were in the marvelous Sengoku Era SLG ‘The Ambition of Oda Nobunaga’ and played a very active part in the second half of the scenario.

“I’m thankful. Nobuna has become really kind to me.”

“That’s right Yoshiharu. In case of emergency your mansion will prevent the enemy from invading and attacking the inner citadel because it was made as a disposable fortress. Get it?”

“That’s not kind at all!”

“That plain building over there is the residence that Takechiyo stays at isn’t it?”

“Uwa, it’s shabby. Though Motoyasu isn’t a vassal of the Oda clan, that is some pitiful treatment.”

“According to that child, she said that she would use her own money to stay at a hotel even if she visits the capital. If the battle with the Takeda clan continues, the military expenditures will pile up. Besides, because all of the vassals that participated in the Honbyo Temple riot have returned, the salaries they have to pay have more than doubled.”

“She has a lot of hardships~”

“Sniff, sniff. This castle gate is too long... I’m getting tired from climbing stairs everywhere...”

“My kimono is becoming a hindrance and I am hot. Hi, hi.”

“It’s better if you exercise a little. Human beings become energized when they walk up stairs! Also when horseback riding, but when the thighs are abused neither the heart or head are refreshed right?”

Well Nobuna’s mind and body are both healthy if you put aside that she is irritable and short-tempered, Yoshiharu thought.

“We have arrived. This is the “Tetsumon” [T/N: Iron gate] that connects to the inner citadel. As the name suggests, it’s an enormous gate built of iron. This black gate is the boundary between this world and Azuchi Castle!”

“Those are Namban words written on the gate right? Sniff, sniff. I think Kanbei can read it.”

““Any person that passes through this gate will abandon all of their despair,’ is what is written there, Hanbei. Because it is the gate to heaven. The Azuchi inner citadel, the dreamland that we built for the end of battle. This space will become Japan’s symbol of Tenka Fubu. It will be suited for the visitors from Namban countries and the Roman pope, I want to make it known that this “Paradise” called Azuchi exists in Japan. The ‘golden country Zipangu’ that Marco Polo noted, it truly exists in the distant eastern sea.”

“So it is a bilingual guide? As usual your ideas are ahead by several hundred years.”

“Even if I am praised in future language, I won’t be happy at all, Yoshiharu.”

The page who followed Nobuna opened the iron gate slowly, and the Yoshiharu party entered the inner sanctum.

Awhile ago Yoshiharu had climbed the castle tower that was still under construction, but this was the first time he had entered inside the inner sanctum.

“Wow....it is beautiful Yoshiharu-san.”

“Oh. So elegant!”

“When the jet black iron gate is opened there is a world of pure white – it’s a sand bar Nobuna-sama. The contrast of black and white, the contrast of the feel of the materials of the iron and sand bar is wonderful.”

“I designed it while thinking of Rikyuu. Isn’t seeing this place the greatest?”

A quiet sand bar that cleanses the soul spread out in front of Yoshiharu.

On the right, the seven story tall tower, the Azuchi castle tower.

On the left is the jet black exterior of the place.

“Oh. I only saw the castle tower from the base of the mountain, this palace is splendid too. It’s a building more elegant than the Emperor’s residence in the capital.”

“I was praised by Yoshimoto, it will be rainy tomorrow won’t it? If Yoshimoto who is particular about the elegance of the court says so, I guess it’s a hit. Because beyond here is as complicated as a labyrinth, don’t get separated from me. Because the inner palace is made like a labyrinth to be able to play hide-and-seek for three whole days!”

“What on earth is the meaning in supporting hide-and-seek?”

“Be silent Yoshiharu! It is a labyrinth that you can’t learn the route and structure no matter how many times you visit, it’s the secret to constantly gather tourists! I wonder if the expanding and renovation of the castle will never be over.”

Is this the Shinjuku Station dungeon or Yokohama Station dungeon, Yoshiharu thought.

“Of course there is a hidden reason to continue granting jobs to introduce more construction in the castle and make money.”

“Is it the reason that the Yokohama Station dungeon continued having construction done for a century.”

“What is that about Danjo? To enter the Imperial Palace and the castle tower, you have to climb up the stairway.

“Is the stairway, those stairs with the wooden roof that extend into the sky, Nobuna-sama? Ah, oh, ah, do you climb it? Isn’t it dangerous?”

“That’s right Juubei. You have to climb up. In the inner sanctum there are four places, the castle tower, the front palace, the south palace, and the river temple palace. Everything is connected by the stairway and you can move between the four palaces without getting wet when it rains. The stairway becomes sloping stairs, because the differences in height between the palaces is steep. Since this was all built on top of the mountain.”

“Nobuna-sama. I have a memory of seeing that stairway somewhere. Sniff, sniff. Did you possible imitate the huge aerial shrine that was said to exist in Izumo, the Kitsuki Grand Shrine? It is said that the former Kitsuki Grand Shrine probably was connected to the earth by stairs from the heavens.”

“Right on the money Hanbei. When the Amano-Iwato was opened, there were stairs that hung in the heavens connecting this world and Yoshiharu’s world. Seeing that, I realized. Maybe the Izumo’s aerial shrine was built in a location to connect the two worlds. The reason that I built the multi-storied castle tower on Mt. Azuchi is because I wanted to climb to a high place and look down at Lake Biwa and Eizan, I think that it is too much of a coincidence that I reproduced the ancient Kitsuki Grand Shrine.”

“Yes. Azuchi castle is definitely a castle that extends to heaven. ‘Any person that passes through this gate will abandon all of their despair’-”

“Because the Three Sacred Treasures used up their spiritual power, Yoshiharu can’t return anymore, but that doesn’t mean much. It seems they really climbed the stairs that reached heaven, doesn’t it feel like that? It will be a big hit with tourists.”

To compare the palace you live in to the Izumo Grand Shrine, isn’t it a bit disrespectful even for Nobuna-sama Senpai, Mitsuhide whispered into Yoshiharu’s ear.

Wait. Kobayakawa-san said that the ancient Izumo Grand Shrine may have been made for opening the Amano-Iwato too, Yoshiharu remembered.

Hey. There’s no way this Azuchi castle which constructed a high-rise castle tower and stairway on the mountaintop can become a huge device used to open the Amano-Iwato right.....no, it’s just a coincidence. Nobuna of course doesn’t have such an intention. I have already decided to live and die in this world. Let’s stop bringing that up again.

We entered the corridor in the air, the stairway, and the ‘Imperial Palace’ was on the left.

The inside of the Imperial Palace was the exact opposite of jet black exterior, it as a golden world.

Everything was shining with gold.

The walls.

The ceiling.

In frame of the sliding doors.

In the tea ceremony set.

In the world of dazzling gold, the jet black master of tea ceremonies Sen No Rikyuu waited alone. “Please have tea.” “Ri, kyuu?” “It’s complimentary.” Yoshiharu spoke in surprise.

“That Hideyoshi-ossan built the golden tea-ceremony room in Osaka Castle is a famous story, right? Was there already a ‘golden building’ beyond even the golden tea-ceremony rooms in Azuchi castle!?”

Yoshiharu accepted Rikyuu’s tea while getting goosebumps.

“Almost all of the Oda clan’s saving should have been poured into the iron armored ships. How did you gather so much gold, Nobuna-sama?”

“It is the result of Rikyuu’s gold tea ceremony. Though there is only just enough to paste it on as thin gold leaf, won’t it be appropriate for the ‘Golden Country Zipangu’? The missionaries were surprised too. Frois said there isn’t this much gold in Europe’s imperial courts either. This golden imperial palace is the centerpiece of Azuchi Castle along with the castle tower.”

“Hawawa. It’s so dazzling I can’t open my eyes, sob sob.”

“My my. The contrast of the jet black exterior and the golden interior decorations is also shocking isn’t it. This has already exceeded the Golden Pavilion of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu! What, what did you build Nobuna-san!”

“When I am praised by Yoshimoto, it seems to be a little unpleasant~”

“Oh? There is another Juubei standing over there? Who on earth is that, Senpai?”

Mitsuhide pointed ahead of her.

On a sliding paper door dividing the rooms, there was an image of Oda Nobuna and Akechi Mitsuhide drawn by the great painter, Kano Eitoku. The facial expressions shown were so vivid it was like they were alive.

“As for this, it is a portrait of the Oda Clan’s retainers which I forcibly drove Kano Eitoku to get ready in time for today’s unveiling. Because Kano Eitoku said ‘My brush does not advance....’ and persistently wouldn’t draw, I decided to confine him for a short while in the Azuchi Castle’s underground jail and he decided to work very hard!

He is half-dead but it’s alright.”

On second thought, let’s retract “Nobuna grew up.” She is as unreasonable as ever. Yoshiharu worried about the body of poor Kano Eitoku and grieved.

“Ah. It was a picture? It was too good, I thought it was the genuine article. However the eyes are very big in all of the pictures, Nobuna-sama.

“Yes. It’s different from the style of painting we are used to seeing from the Kanou faction. The writing brushed used, and the color usage is altogether closer to a Namban picture.”

“I I I I I am also drawn! Wh wh wh wh why am I wetting my pants in this picture!? HIEEEEE!?”

“Ha ha. The man of the future Yoshiharu initiated Kano Eitoku into the ‘Akihabara-style moe pictures’. The latest art of drawing that swept over Japan of the 21st century will conquer the whole world from now on! While it smells of a fraud, Eitoku looked at the pictures that Yoshiharu drew, asked “Is this the soul of moe?”, and was completely defeated. Then after repeatedly studying he managed to complete his own moe pictures.”

“Senpai. You are even tampering with the culture of the past. As one would expect of you.”

“Hey. An artist is a difficult existence. He wanted to see a future drawing at any cost. I won’t survive if I defy him carelessly. However, as for that fellow his art explodes too much and it seems to be frowned upon in Europe where they are strict about lolicon....in particular this one where Hanbei is peeing with teary eyes would be especially bad.”

“So then why am I leaking!? I I I’m being bullied! Sob, sob.”

“I’m about to make Eitoku draw his next masterpiece. An “*Azuchi Castle drawing*” or “*Let’s see Azuchi castle from the sky*”. After Himiko-sama sees it, I’m going to send it to the Roman Pope on a Namban ship. The Roman Pope can look at Azuchi castle from the other side of the sea. Fufu.”

“No no no, because his last work is finally over, free him Nobuna. Do you intend to make Eitoku Kanou die from overwork? The Oda clan would be blackened.”

Nobuna works her subordinates hard as ever.

“Now. We will climb to the top floor of the castle tower. The view from the mountaintop is superb to say the least!”

It goes without saying that inside the Azuchi castle’s greatest building, the seven-storied castle tower, many gorgeous golden pictures were displayed that were drawn by the exploited Kano Eitoku.

The lower floors had landscape paintings and animal pictures, the areas that Nobuna will go nearby every time she goes up a floor exposed her preferences, the castle really was Nobuna’s.

“On the fourth floor are the ghosts, evil spirits, and demons that Hanbei exorcised out of Kyoto. The sixth floor makes your blood race, we gathered portraits of the Himekishis that appeared in ‘The Three Kingdoms’ and ‘The Water Margin’! On the seventh floor which is also the top floor, we gathered all of the great heroes of the world! I undertook all of mankind’s original sin! Namban representatives! Jesus Christ! It’s a secret whether he was married or not. A priest is indispensable to deliver us from Samsara! A child was born named ‘disaster’! Indian representative! Buddha! He does not say much but he explained the human morals once he arrived on land, that’s why the Tang dynasty is the greatest! East Asian representative! Confucius! Though I don’t really understand it, the representatives of the Ottoman Empire can’t be drawn due to circumstances! And then Japan’s representative! Our history is older than the Roman Pope! The oldest families and the oldest gods in the world! She who opened the Amano-Iwato, the founder of the original family! The Sun Goddess Amaterasu, also known as the first Himiko!”

“Aside from Amaterasu, why are all of the others changed into women!?”

“I don’t know. It’s Eitoku’s hobby?”

“Excuse me. Nobuna-sama? This seems to be Nobuna-sama’s bedroom here. No matter how you look at it, isn’t it too scary? Sob, sob.”

“It’s terribly gaudy. By any chance Nobuna-san, do you see yourself as the saint who will stand above all of the armies of the world? This is the difference in our caliber, this is why I couldn’t win in our battle.”

“Hie. This is blasphemy, there will be punishment. We’ll receive punishment from all the countries of the world! Knock on wood!”

Everybody was dumbfounded.

Nobuna who didn't believe at all in the curses of gods and Buddha said nonchalantly, "Because I am making the sightseeing charges alone 100 kan, it has to be this flashy."

"Because Azuchi Castle is a dreamland it's alright. Look. Eizan can be seen from the other side of Lake Biwa. And there is Kyoto over there beyond Eizan. Since that ancient capital over there accumulated the acme of the dynasties in Japan's history, Azuchi Castle which was built brand-new on the shore of Lake Biwa will be Japan's new capital. Here, the people will not be bound by the fetters of lineage and social status. Though I respect past traditions, the present Japan needs the hope called the future. Hope that this world of battle will end, and a new era will come. I want to make that hope for the future visible to the people."

Nobuna murmured this as she walked over to the indoor cornice and looked down on the magnificent scenery.

Yoshiharu and Mitsuhide went out to the cornice and lined up on Nobuna's left and right.

"The biggest program of the Azuchi Castle unveiling festival is tonight. The O-bon festival, isn't it the special day that the souls of the dead return to this world? When the sun sets and it becomes dark, innumerable paper lanterns will be raised in Azuchi Castle and the main road, and the ship for the spirits will float on Lake Biwa. It is similar to the Tsushima Tenno festival in my hometown of Owari. During the night, the shadow of Azuchi Castle decorated with lanterns will shine upon the surface of Lake Biwa. I'm sure it will be beautiful. It should be a truly unforgettable beautiful memory. For the living, and for the dead. I don't believe in the souls of the dead, but if Azuchi really attracts such things, I'm sure they will be pleased."

Or will they be angry because it is attracting too much attention, Nobuna smiled cheerlessly.

Akechi Mitsuhide who is Nobuna's sworn friend and has a good understanding of her personality, clenched Nobuna's hand quietly.

"These chaotic times have lasted for a century. All of the people of this world have lamented, the Honbyo Temple laughed it off with manzai, and the public has searched for peace of mind through various methods. Hope for the future, Nobuna-sama says such things, it can only be heard as a prayer to Buddha for the people whose hearts have been hardened by these chaotic times. But this Azuchi Castle will show Nobuna-sama's will more eloquently than words."

"This is dreamland for humans by humans, Azuchi. From the new world of this white sand bar, a human being can climb by foot through the stairway to the castle tower and the realm of gods. Being able to stare at the other side of Eizan with Nobuna-sama in the castle tower of Azuchi Castle in this way, I am very happy. It's only a little regrettable that Kanbei-san is still waiting for Yoshiharu-san at the seminary. I...it's good to be alive."

Takenaka Hanbei quietly snuggled up Yoshiharu while being a little moved to tears.

“The four Himekishis representing the Sengoku Era assembled together on the castle tower in this way. Such a luxurious space. This is also due to the efforts of Sagara Yoshiharu.”

Imagawa Yoshimoto opened the “admirable” fan and laughed beautifully.

Yoshiharu thought that it was a miracle that these four people are lined up in this way at this moment.

Imagawa Yoshimoto is a Himekishi that should have originally died in the battle of Okehazama.

Takenaka Hanbei fell ill in the middle of the siege of Miki Castle and was destined to die in the camp.

Yoshiharu intervened in fate of these two and achieved this miracle.

However, Oda Nobuna and Akechi Mitsuhide –

In the history I know, I think within two years of the completion of Azuchi Castle, the ‘Honnoji Incident’ happens. ‘Oda Nobunaga’ disappears from the earth without leaving a single strand of hair in the Honnoji Incident, and after a “brief reign”, the rebel Mitsuhide Akechi is defeated too. The castle tower of Azuchi Castle is also burnt down in the middle of the turmoil and it disappeared quickly as well.

Will the Honnoji Incident really occur? Fate may have already been rewritten. Such a thing may not come, please let these four Himekishis continue smiling happily forever somehow. Nobuna’s dream, don’t let it go up in flames a few years after the completion of Azuchi castle and be forgotten.

Yoshiharu couldn’t help feeling that time had stopped right now.

From the top floor of the Castle Tower, you can look down at the remaining three palaces within the inner citadel.

He had already visited the gorgeous imperial palace that took pride in its jet black exterior and gold furnishings.

Across from the castle tower, the south palace is located behind the imperial palace.

Even with the improbable view, it seems to be a mansion where you can spend time and escape the public gaze.

Built apart from the other palaces like a back room, the River Temple palace was like a villa.

“The four palaces were assembled in an array in Azuchi Castle. It’s totally like the Rokujouin that Hikaru Genji built isn’t it?”

“What is that Yoshimoto-chan?”

“The man of the future doesn’t know elegance. Wouldn’t that be the many sweethearts of Hikaru Genji? Genji-san was always luxurious, he rebuilt the mansion of one of his lovers, Rokujo no Miyasudokoro, on a large scale, and thus the dream mansion ‘Rokujouin’ was completed. He built four elegant palaces which seemed to reproduce spring, summer, autumn, and winter and bound all the palaces together with a corridor. And then he let one of his lovers and her family live in each respective palace.”

Imagawa Yoshimoto who had aristocratic tastes begun to talk about the “Rokujouin of Hikaru Genji” while looking up to heaven with her fan.

“Is it the harem that would be talked about using future words? All of the Himekishis of the Sengoku Era like ‘The Tale of Genji’.”

“Azuchi Castle that was completed with four palaces, a newly built Rokujouin for the Warring States era, it may be said that this Rokujouin is made for Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“For, me?”

“Just a minute, Yoshimoto. This Azuchi Castle that was built. This is Oda Nobuna-sama’s. Why would this castle be Saru’s?” Nobuna protested it but Yoshimoto began to dance by herself “This is the Oda clan’s *“who do we make the wife of Sagara Yoshiharu problem”*, it can be settled elegantly by making this Azuchi Castle the Rokujouin. Everything is clear to me today! Clear!”

“If you dance too much you are going to fall down to the sand bar.”

“Umm. Yoshimoto-sama? What kind of thing is this? Sob.”

“If it’s the Tale of Genji, this Juubei is also well-acquainted. It’s imitating the way in which Hikaru Genji built the four large palaces in Rokujouin to prevent an explosive situation and allowed his large number of lovers to coexist in peace. You are saying that you should divide each of Senpai’s wives and lovers and let them each live in the four major palaces of Azuchi Castle right?”

Mitsuhide nodded, and Nobuna knitted her eyebrows with a “Is that a joke?”.

“Yes, just like that. This gorgeous castle tower is the spring palace that was selected as the most important by Hikaru Genji where he raised his destined woman Murasaki no Ue. There was a problem with Murasaki no Ue’s social position and she wasn’t able to be Genji’s legal wife, but Genji loved Murasaki no Ue more than any other woman. Murasaki no Ue was possessed by Rokujo, who was left broken-hearted by Genji and became a vengeful spirit, and then died, and Genji became a priest in despair at the world and ‘disappeared’. It seems that the castle tower suits the princess Nobuna-san right?”

“So? From the start this castle tower is the building that I would live in!”

“I am of the noble lineage, I am the one who most resembles Ai no Ue who became Genji’s legal wife. Thus with my noble lineage I can take the seat as Sagara Yoshiharu’s legal wife. Ohohoho.”

“Huh? After deciding to get married, aren’t you fawning over Yoshiharu all the time?”

“The exterior of the gorgeous Imperial Palace is just like the Summer Palace. It is appropriate for me to live in the front entrance of Azuchi Castle. However Aoi no Ue died young and wasn’t able to enter the summer palace. I was originally destined to die young like Aoi no Ue at Okehazama, and I was saved by Sagara Yoshiharu and continued to live. Is that the difference between me and Aoi no Ue?”

“Sniff. Yoshiharu-san seems to be a better gentleman than Hikaru Genji right. Because Hikaru Genji lost his wife and lovers one after another. Additionally the main point of Hikaru Genji is that Lady Rokujo who failed to monopolize Hikaru Genji became a vindictive spirit that possessed and killed.....”

“I, is that right, Hanbei?”

“Yes. There are many explanations of the apparition, the vengeful ghost that appears in the Tale of Genji, but it was settled that the criminal who possessed and killed Murasaki no Ue is the vindictive spirit of Lady Rokujo.”

That is totally Sadako. Then the Tale of Genji was a horror novel, Yoshiharu became aware of this for the first time.

“Wait a moment Yoshimoto, why do you act like the legal wife! You said this was a mere play to suppress the riot! If I break through the Oda clan encirclement and subjugate the world, we’ll pretend that didn’t happen and Yoshiharu and I will get married!”

“Nooo. That isn’t it Nobuna-sama. You should give a serious wedding with Senpai to this Juubei. Isn’t the position of Murasaki no Ue enough for Nobuna-sama?”

“You too...”

Because Mitsuhide was going to silently pull out her pistol, Yoshiharu stopped her in a hurry.

“Ohoho. The passionate Mitsuhide-san is evidently Lady Rokujo. The sunless south palace which is located at the back of the Imperial Palace, is the autumn palace where Lady Rokujo built up her grudges. Lady Rokujo gave up Genji and left to Ise, and she made her daughter live in the Autumn Palace in place of herself.”

“Why is this Juubei Lady Rokujo? It doesn’t seem like I’ll possess and kill Nobuna-sama sometime soon. Stop joking. First, Juubei won’t give up Senpai and leave for Ise. Kazumasu Takigawa is already in Ise.”

Shock.

Yoshimoto-chan can’t know the future of Honnoji Temple, is it accidental, Yoshimoto’s “Hikaru Genji’s Rokujouin” setting is strangely similar to the Honnoji Temple Incident..... Yoshiharu acquired a strange premonition.

“Yes, yes. If Nobuna-san relegates Mitsuhide-san to Ise, Mitsuhide-san may revolt. A passionate woman can be more terrifying than an oni. Ohohoho.”

“Shameless! Though you were defeated in battle, surrendered to an enemy, and made to work as a figurehead shogun, you seem to spend every day happily like a fool!”

“Excuse me. The winter palace in ‘Genji’s Rokujouin’ – the Himekishi who lives in the River Temple Palace built apart from the other palaces hasn’t been selected. If I’m not mistaken, Akashi who came from Harima should live in the winter palace. She is the princess famous for being a match with Murasaki no Ue for Hikaru Genji’s love. When Hikaru Genji was exiled to Suma, Akashi received Genji’s affection and became pregnant....”

Hanbei cut in nervously.

“Speaking of someone native to Harima, it’s Kanbei, but she would act selfishly since she would hate playing the role of Yoshiharu’s lover in the Hikaru Genji scenario, so let me... me..... uu. I’m sorry. I’m sorry.”

“That’s right, Hanbei-san. Of course! When speaking of a match for Nobuna-san who comes from Saigoku, it’s Takakage Kobayakawa of the Mori clan! Someone called the ‘present Akashi’ is already in this world! For that person, Yoshiharu served the Mori clan for half a year; a worthy rival to Nobuna-san! She is the Himekishi who deserves to live in the River Temple Palace. ”

“Sob. That’s right. It’s Kobayakawa-sama. Well. I, where do I live...”

“Because Hanbei-san is still a child, you have the position of Hikaru Genji’s own child, Yuugiri-chan. I’ll raise you in my summer palace. Ohohoho.”

“Hieee? His daughter? At the very least let me have the position of younger sister...it’s fine...it’s nothing. Sob sob.”

“My ingenious schemes of love are overflowing. Nobuna-san? Kobayakawa-san should be received into Azuchi Castle, and be given the position of the lover of Sagara Yoshiharu. That person’s heart was stolen by Sagara Yoshiharu, and she seems like a woman who would prefer to be in the position of mistress. With this, the Mori clan and the Oda clan would become one. The threat from Saigoku would vanish. Ohohoho.”

You can’t be serious! Nobuna stomped her foot on the ground and the air shook with the echo.

“Calm down, Nobuna! If it collapses, everybody will fall to our deaths.”

“It is the Tale of Genji. Hikaru Genji is the worst kind of man who changed from one girl to another! The current world is all about monogamy! Even in the Namban countries it’s one man one wife! Because in Catholicism, even divorce is forbidden!”

“Uwa, my ear hurts! H, however. A harem, that is to say polygamy is the natural instinct of men! So please forgive Hikaru Genji, Nobuna!”

“N, n, n, not allowed, all f, f, f, f, four of them being accepted as Yoshiharu’s lovers, it’s no joke! My, my my happiness will just be a quarter now!”

“Ugh. If it’s four people, this Juubei can still bear with it. But if this Juubei can’t be the lawful wife, I will become a vindictive spirit and curse the other women to death. No, won’t a vengeful spirit be half-dead? If so, I’ll use this pistol on my love rivals without any mercy.”

“Nobuna and Juubei-chan, you don’t need to take Yoshimoto’s love story seriously! Because I won’t be the manager of a harem like Genji so it’s alright! You flatter the wife in that direction, and win your lover’s favor here, and give your sweetheart a present to clear the dissatisfaction over there – it’s no joke to run around in that way to avoid the explosion of an unhappiness bomb!”

“Then Senpai, love Juubei only! I have such a perfect personality, yet you... If anything troublesome were to happen, Juubei will not go along with it, that’s too much!”

“That’s right, Yoshiharu! Aren’t you devoted to me? When we opened the Amano-Iwato, didn’t we swear our love to each other? In the first place, what is with that Takakage Kobayakawa? Why did it come out later that you acted as lovers?”

“Authorize Kobayakawa-san as Sagara Yoshiharu’s lover and let her live in Azuchi Castle. I really believe this plan is wonderful.” Yoshimoto tilted her head.

“Sagara Yoshiharu is the world’s greatest man. If you let him roam around Japan he will ensnare the Himekishi of each country in turn, we’ll gather all of the powerful enemies in Azuchi Castle without fighting and achieve ‘Tenka Fuku’” [T/N: Instead of Tenka Fubu it’s unifying the world with love. Yoshimoto is punny.] As for the weird big-shot Himekishis who choose war over love, it is Uesugi-san and Takeda-san. Or maybe it’s possible even with those two. Yes, all though both of them don’t look like it, they are devoted readers of the Tale of Genji. Yoshiharu is the greatest man.”

“Hey Yoshimoto. Would you like to be pushed off the seventh floor to the sand bar?”

“I didn’t necessarily think it was a joke either. Though Kobayakawa Takakage was famous for being an arrogant woman who is indifferent to men, after spending half a year with Senpai she became madly in love and deredere....in the first place it is strange that that the most beautiful girl in the world Nobuna-sama and this Juubei are frantically scrambling for Senpai, because Senpai is a dreadful man who is the opposite of us with an unattractive appearance.”

“Wasn’t it already understood? I have the personality that would rather burn something if I can’t monopolize it, Yoshiharu.”

“Juubei will become Lady Rokujo if broken hearted.”

“A girl of marriageable age is terrifying. I’m scared.” Yoshiharu said while clinging to Hanbei and trembling.

You really did become a lolicon, that’s why in the new Nagahama Castle your “little sisters” have been increasing one after another! Nobuna snapped again.

“...Hanbei, give me your wisdom. Save me from this bloodbath. I beg of you.”

“T, the shape of happiness is different for each person. If there is a woman who won’t be satisfied if her beloved man is snatched away by other woman and she can’t monopolize him, there can be a girl who can find her happiness from just looking on from afar and merely assisting. And there are women like Yoshimoto-sama, you can find happiness and fortune no matter the situation or circumstances and won’t be troubled.”

“*Finding happiness from looking on from afar* sounds like the happiness of a child, actually Yoshimoto-chan really seems like one. She doesn’t have the gloominess characteristic of a commander who surrendered, and she doesn’t flatter Nobuna at all.”

“I was taught the *path to happiness* by my teacher Tawara Sessai”, Yoshimoto said quietly while looking up at the blue sky.

Somehow the usually bright Yoshimoto had a different expression than normal.

“Sniff. Is it Tawara Sessai? Though he had the position of monk, he was the distinguished monk who served as the prime minister of Suruga’s Imagawa house right?”

“My father often battled Tawara Sessai in Mikawa too and had a hard time. I believe he died of alcoholism despite being a monk?”

“Sagara Senpai. Tawara Sessai wasn’t an ordinary tactician, but the true prime minister. He managed the Imagawa house alone. When Suruga was thrown into chaos in a feud over the succession of the house, he chose Yoshimoto Imagawa as the successor and the position of daimyo, the one who trained the world’s number one kyudo archer is also Tawara Sessai. If Tawara Sessai was still alive, the Oda clan might not have gotten a complete victory in the Battle of Okehazama? With the great commander it might have had an opposite result.”

“Sessai used up his life span before accomplishing a march to the capital. It was his fate.” Yoshimoto let a few murmured words leak out.

For Yoshimoto who was abandoned and raised in a temple for as long as she could remember and wasn’t considered a successor to the Imagawa clan, Sessai was a teacher and father. The reason that she learned the culture of the Kyoto aristocrats was because she spent her childhood being lead around Kyoto by Sessai.

The Prime Minister, Tawara Sessai, supported Suruga’s Imagawa clan while also being a priest, and went through his whole life celibate. He demonstrated a talent in Buddhist ascetic practices and learning, wasn’t interested in politics and battle, and was appointed as the person in charge of raising the very young Yoshimoto. When Yoshimoto was unexpectedly dragged into the feud over the succession of Suruga’s Imagawa clan, Sessai’s life was changed.

From a Buddhist monk that proceeded down the path of peace, to a prime minister who personally came to fight on the battlefield.

Sessai protected Yoshimoto who he had raised like his own daughter, it was her fate to be swallowed in the war over Suruga and die, but Sessai did not accept it.

Therefore, in order to protect Yoshimoto he picked up the sword.

Sessai also had a talent at politics and military skill. Sessai poured all of his ability into strengthening the Imagawa clan to defend Yoshimoto.

He suppressed the civil war in Suruga, fought against the Hojo in the east, fought against Matsudaira Ienori and Oda Nobuhide in the west, made the Imagawa clan be reborn into a powerful Sengoku Era daimyo with an established reputation, and formed the former Kai-

Sagami-Suruga alliance, and finally made a country so powerful that everyone accepted that ‘the next ruler of the whole world will be the Imagawa clan’, and opened up the path for Imagawa Yoshimoto to invade the capital.

However, the Sessai who lives on in Yoshimoto’s memories, was far apart from the world’s image of the *fighting Prime Minister*, and was quiet and mature.

His life ended while he was studying unconcerned in a Kyoto temple, such a way of life was suitable for the monk who was free of avarice.

For someone like Sessai, politics and battle were the hard labor he had to perform to not worry about Yoshimoto’s body.

The elegant Sessai and Yoshimoto both didn’t like war councils.

“*What is happiness?*” might be a thing they discussed.

“*Are you alright? Hime grabs ahold of happiness.*”

Sessai said that to Yoshimoto many times. He instructed her.

“*Even as a Himekishi, you won’t be happy if you only win battles.*” The shape of happiness is different depending on the person. Or possibly, even if it is the same human, the form of happiness will change every time they gain age and experience.;

“*Only winning isn’t happiness?*”

“*Yes. Happiness is something in the heart of a person. If someone can say “I am happy now” in any circumstances or fate, they will feel true happiness. Perhaps there are princesses that can’t find happiness unless their life is embroiled in battle like Harunobu Takeda and Nagao Kagetora.*”

“*It’s hard Sessai. Then how can I be happy?*”

“*You have no choice but to find that yourself. But Hime is equipped with the power to gain happiness. Anyone can become cheerful and bright when with Hime. Hime doesn’t know how to personally walk down the path of sorrow. It is your nature to find your own happiness in any kind of troubled times. It is Hime’s power. Survive without abandoning your life at any time. Live, survive, and do not forget how to smile.*”

“*Oh. It is said that I am selfish.*”

“*Become even more selfish. Obey the voice of your heart. You must not depend on some transient god such as Bishamonten like Nagao Kagetora in Echigo. Grab happiness in your own hand. It exists in a human heart. I say this as a humble monk, the happiness that you obtain by*

clinging on and relying on gods and Buddha, it is something like an illusion. It's the same as depending on drugs like poppy and being temporarily intoxicated. Happiness is only in yourself."

"Sessai is very harsh with Nagao Kagetora."

"To have so much talent that she calls herself the incarnation of Bishamonten, it's irritating to watch. As for the worth of Takeda Shingen, she is not dependent on god, and is convinced that the way to happiness is in being victorious in battle. Because both of them are obsessed with the one thing called victory, they'll fell into an impasses where they can't yield to each other. They are too intelligent. In that respect, because Hime has no talent for politics or military ability, you can instead walk the shortest straight route to reach happiness. You don't need a roundabout route because you are ignorant, incompetent, and pure. To be envious of the talent of the people called geniuses, you don't need to be burdened by such stupid work as a ruler. Thus this humble monk chose Hime as the daimyo of Suruga."

"That wasn't a compliment Sessai? Then am I completely useless?"

"No. You should give all the common miscellaneous matters to this Sessai. It is fine if Hime just laughs brightly."

"Sessai is happy with that?"

"I already am. Because this humble monk was able to serve Hime in this way. I have no regrets in life."

"That is splendid. Recently the amount of sake has been increasing a lot."

"Haha. Now that you say that. I cannot criticize Nagao Kagetora. Hime, if I die before this humble monk can invade the capital, the Imagawa clan will weaken. Right now I am educating the child tanuki, Motoyasu Matsudaira of Mikawa as a successor of this humble monk, but that fellow is a late-bloomer by nature. A lot of time and experience is necessary for her to bloom. If this humble monk dies, at that time give up on advancing to the capital. An excellent strategist is indispensable for commanding a battle to reach the capital. For you to start a war to reach the capital without this humble monk, that is my one and only greatest fear for Hime."

But for the Suruga vassal corps and the people of the world who were waiting breathlessly for Imagawa Yoshimoto's invasion of the capital, giving up on going to the capital would be hard now – Sessai smiled gently as if realizing that he only had a little bit of life remaining.

"Don't say something so unlucky, Sessai. I won't be happy only winning a war? Then it's simple. Even if I failed in a war to conquer the capital, I will find my happiness by any means. As long as I live I can be happy right? True happiness, that feeling is inside me."

“Yes. I would like to see the child that Hime gives birth to.”

“Does this Japan have a man that matches me? It would be unpleasant to marry a man who isn’t the world’s greatest man.”

“Hmm. Surprising, I don’t know whether taking the world or taking in a son-in-law will be more difficult for Hime. This poor monk has to be careful with his liquor and live long.”

Yoshiharu glanced at Yoshimoto’s profile without thinking.

Nobuna, Mitsuhide, and Hanbei.

Yoshimoto smiled without being moved to tears.

“Sessai’s words were not lies. Now when I’m looking at this superb view with all of you while talking about elegance in this dreamlike Azuchi castle, I am very happy. The camelia, the sakura, and the life of a person, sooner or later they scatter. The instant it blooms is wonderful because it is destined to be scattered.

Just when Yoshiharu, Nobuna, and Mitsuhide’s relationship was on the verge of collapse, Yoshimoto tried to support Yoshiharu by personally coming forward as the ‘third candidate’ – it’s also for that purpose that she talked about the story of the palace in “The Tale of Genji”. But her feelings in wanting to get married with Yoshiharu were real.

“Sniff. Yoshimoto-sama’s happiness, the trigger was Yoshiharu-san saving Yoshimoto-sama at the Battle of Okehazama. But the happiness that Yoshimoto-sama feels now isn’t something that can be given by another person. You got it from your own will power and feelings.”

“That’s right, Hanbei-san. When it’s time for me to die, I will think back to today. I want to grab ahold of the happiness on being human, while dying proudly. Even if it’s a short instant, as long as I can have a taste of that moment, my life will be fulfilled

“Yes. I think so too. A person must not live alone. I was kept alive by many people, you can live for the first time by being rescued. But – happiness, isn’t a thing that can be given by another person, you have to find it yourself. You have to decide for yourself whether your life was happy.”

Hanbei gave a big nod.

“But Hanbei, even if in the end you had grab ahold of it, but that thing is still a separate entity from you. Like the world, or Yoshiharu. If we did not come across with anyone, or meet up with them, there won’t be any dreams, ambitions or happiness in our hearts.

“I, Is that so Nobuna-sama, that’s right,” Hanbei smiled wryly.

“Everyone is here thanks to Yoshiharu meddling without thinking about the consequences, when I was about to become a demon king many times, Yoshiharu always risked his life and protected me. Therefore we were all able to greet today’s occasion together. I have to thank you, Yoshiharu.”

“No, Nobuna.”

“Yoshiharu, I am still not yet satisfied. Today isn’t the summit of my life, it is still just getting started. A decisive battle is ahead of us, and I have not even obtained Yoshiharu.”

“What did you say? Nobuna-sama has the memory of the ‘Opening of the Amano-Iwato.’ If it’s Juubei, I would be full just from that.”

“Yeah Juubei? Only a kiss is insufficient.”

“Was k-k-k-k-kissing n-n-n-not enough? Nobuna-sama is beyond greedy!”

“Of course I’m greedy and my pride is high too. I am the one who rules over the whole country!”

“Because this Juubei is a person of the world who experienced living hand to mouth as a vagrant, I am not that greedy. But the greediest man in the Oda clan must be Senpai. Because he has been devoting his life to any Himekishi reflected in his sight without thinking about the consequences from the start, it has become the greatest trouble.”

“On the contrary, Yoshiharu is the greediest man in the world. Anyway, let alone the people of the Oda clan, in the end the evil power of Saru has extended to the princesses of other houses.”

“I also managed to save Senpai’s life, really, he might have become dependant on me. But when Senpai isn’t near, the heart of Juubei seems to break.”

“Oh what a coincidence. Same for me.”

“When Senpai disappeared, Nobuna-sama was lively!”

“Was that how it was? But if you want to obtain Yoshiharu, being weak is useless Juubei. Yoshiharu likes a girl whose heart burns with ambition. Won’t I hog both the world and Yoshiharu?”

“Hahaha. It won’t go like that. I will give the world to Nobuna-sama, but Juubei will win Senpai’s heart in the end. Watch, this Juubei is tenacious. Because I am the woman who will support him.”

“Juubei. What kind of future comes is the result of the choices that we personally walk. Let’s play fairly. No hard feelings. However, I will win.”

“Yes! A demand even more unreasonable than stealing the world, I’m getting even more fired up!”

Triggered by Yoshimoto’s Tale of Genji game, Nobuna and Mitsuhide who were recently becoming dangerous over Yoshiharu, were now smiling.

To the eyes of Yoshiharu who is a blockhead who doesn’t understand the feeling of elegance at all, they looked completely like the princesses that were brought together in Hikaru Genji’s Rokujouin.

Hanbei who had snuggled up next to Yoshiharu whispered in a low voice that only he could hear.

Yoshiharu-san, even though you seem to be convinced that you must watch all the difficulties of the lives of the people you saved until the end, you do not need to take it all upon yourself to that extent. I have my life that should have vanished. That alone is enough. I will finish living the life I was given by Yoshiharu, I decided I won’t have any regrets when my last moments approach. When I have finished living, I will be happy, I think that I will throw out my chest and smile at the end. But I personally have to accomplish this.

There seemed to be some words that Hanbei still wanted to transmit to Yoshiharu, but it seems that she decided to not let the words leave her mouth.

Nobuna-sama and Akechi-sama are both aiming at the happiness in the form called ‘Getting married to Yoshiharu-san’ now, but surely in the future those two can realize a happiness they can get hand in hand. Nobuna-sama and Akechi-sama, because they are human beings they have a delicate appearance, but they have a strong essence. They are wise ladies. Kobayakawa-san is too. So Yoshiharu-san, please live in the way that you believe from now on. Don’t leave any regrets, put your full strength into every moment. I will assist with all of my power too.

That’s right. Nobuna and Juubei-chan, they aren’t such weak people. The Himekishis that live in the Sengoku Era are noble, and are strong. That Kobayakawa-san that seemed to look so delicate, she pushed me into the sea to send me back to Nobuna -

Still while Yoshiharu stroked Hanbei’s head, he couldn’t help wishing once again.

That time would stop forever in this moment-

Halfway up Mt. Azuchi, one of the key features of Azuchi castle, the ‘Soken temple’ was built.

After visiting the inner citadel, the tourist who follows a different route than the major road and climbs down the mountain will flock to this Soken Temple in the middle of the mountain path.

The Soken Temple that Nobuna took Yoshiharu's party to, it seemed to be surprisingly strange, or should it be said to be foolish. It was a Shinto Shrine and Buddhist Temple that completely lacked common sense.

"Yoshiharu. The famous Shinto shrine that will become a key tourist attraction, you said it would be called a 'sacred place' in future words right? So I built it. The newest sacred place for mixing Shintoism and Buddhism, I named it Soken Temple!"

Oh, is that what it is.

In front of Soken Temple, a huge golden statue of Oda Nobuna is displayed.

A large number of girls who came from all over on a pilgrimage, they will throw money offerings at the Oda Nobuna statue and bring their hands together with a *clap*, *clap* and a "Please let me be joined with that person."

"I want to be in love like Nobuna too."

"I hope I can find a good relationship."

"After the Kuki Navy defeated the Murakami Navy, men still haven't gotten closer! I'm a young girl in bloom, but they seem to think of me as more of a monster than Murakami and Saika Magoichi! Please do something for me, God of Love! Oda Nobuna-sama!"

They were praying for love with all of their heart and soul.

The young girls who were old enough to fall in love (and the one woman who passed her marriageable age) flocked to Soken Temple in a surging wave.

Yoshiharu was astonished and at a loss for words.

Even if you need to have a sacred place, how carried away do you have to be to make yourself a god!

"Hieee. Nobuna-sama? Did you enshrine yourself as an object of worship? Even if this country has eight million gods this is blasphemy, you will incur divine punishment!"

Kuwabara Kuwabara [T/N: Chant to prevent lightning strikes], Juubei trembled and chattered.

“This golden statue of me is the new feature of Azuchi Castle, ‘The God of Marriage!’ The ultimate object of worship devised for the hearts of the girls around the nation who are in love with love! My lovely figure that was faithfully projected by the Amano-Iwato, with just a little beautification it reappears!”

“That beautification is WAYYY too much! Your breasts better be that big.”

“I don’t understand what you are saying, Yoshiharu.”

“Sob, sob. Nobuna-sama showed the girl followers of Honbyo Temple a new way of a life of love, and those that participated in the riots abandoned the lifestyle of destroying lives in battle. It’s just like Nobuna-sama to have such an unheard-of shrewd plan to capture their hearts even more.”

“Yes, yes Hanbei. If Tenka Fubu is achieved, the world of war will be over, and even the people that did their utmost to avoid war and survive can now live and love. This is the preliminary arrangements for the coming future.”

“But....even if the specialty is in matchmaking, will the people misunderstand Nobuna-dono as a god?....ending the era of worshipping deities and gods, the hero who created a new era and descend upon it as a worshipped figure, Nobuna-dono had transcended both humans and deities. Not many people will understand this change in history.”

That reminds me, after the death of Oda Nobunaga, old man Hideyoshi who next unified the world became ‘Toyokuni Daimyojin’, and the successor to Hideyoshi, Ieyasu Tokugawa, became ‘Tosho Daigongen.’ The custom to worship the vindictive spirits who became gods like Michizane Sugawara as the spirits of dead people waned in the last years of the Sengoku era. If there are no curses and no grudges, humans and gods became one. That’s what is beginning. Was the turning point of history this Soken Temple by chance? Yoshiharu thought about it.

“Hanbei is worrying unnecessarily. It’s a joke, a joke. I set myself up as the god of love as part of the performance! I’m just playing around, I’m just making fun of Uesugi Kenshin who calls herself the incarnation of the God of War, Bishamonten.”

“Ah. It’s also part of the plan to anger Uesugi-san and get her to quicken the march of her troops. AS expected of you.”

“Haha. Sincerity goes a long way. The one who says it out loud first wins it all.”

“I feel it might be bad if you make her too angry. If Uesugi Kenshin-sama gets really serious, I hear that for a brief moment she becomes even stronger than the unrivaled cavalry that Takeda Shingen leads. If it becomes something like Kawanakajima, the Oda clan will take severe damage which will be beyond what we can recover from. Sob.”

“Still, unless I alter the marching speed of Shingen and Kenshin, the Oda army will not have a chance to win. This is an all-or-nothing gamble.”

“Even so a place like this might be misunderstood as Nobuna-sama’s hobby. You have to change your bad habits, or you will have a painful experience soon.”

“Oh dear. At the base of the golden statue, an explanation about Soken Temple is carved. Moreover, it’s in two languages, Japanese and the Namban language.”

“I have the cooperation of the missionary Frois, I designed it with the convenience of the worshipers from the Namban lands in mind.”

Soken Temple – a noble shrine meant to deify the ruler of the whole country who was born in Owari, Oda Nobuna. For girls who are increasingly intense about love, and to the girls who aren’t popular. To the girl who makes many offerings, the accomplishment of your love and the prosperity of your offspring is promised. In the future my birthday will become a holy day so visit this temple by all means! If you worship me as the most beautiful girl in the world, your love will certainly be fulfilled! The girl who doesn’t worship me will be a virgin until death! Rather, in this world, the afterlife, and in your next life, you will wander for eternity as a virgin who isn’t loved by a man!”

“You know, Nobuna. There is an outrageously nonsensical delusion engraved. Is this really read by the Europeans?”

“In the souvenir shops, a lot of souvenirs like lucky charms and fortune slips with a small image of me are also sold. Both of them cost next to nothing to make. A wonderful profit ratio. This place is the apex of rip-offs. Look look, Yoshiharu, this is the way to prosperity! We are making a killing! It’s often said that monks make pure profit!”

“Hey, listen to me!”

“At last I finally understand why Enryakuji Temple and Mt. Koya guarded the vested interests of their monks so much. Tons of tourists will drop an impressive amount of money in a sacred place! Hey, Hey, Yoshiharu. Following the free-market policy, I want to push forward an ‘Easy Noh dance’ policy. It’s decided, everyone will introduce themselves as a god in this sacred place!”

“The scam artists increase. Well, you are already the boss of the crooks.”

“Of course the immoral sacred places that confuse the people with unscrupulous means will be supervised strictly and immediately destroyed. Oh, because the power of Buddhism has been weakened a lot by the surrender of Honbyo Temple and the disarmament of Enryakuji Temple, Christianity may become too strong, but it might be just right when I think about the relations with the Namban in the future?”

“The profit ratio with Namban trade is wonderful. Because there are a lot of Christian daimyos in Kyushu, the strange and exotic religious items sent from Namban are very interesting for them. Is that the main reason for the Namban trade? Sob.”

While Hanbei and Yoshiharu had a bitter smile, only Mitsuhide had a serious expression on her face and was muttering something to herself.

“...Mmm. Using so many reasons to force a marriage with Senpai, Nobuna-dono had finally proclaimed herself to be a god. To balance the social status of both of you, she wants Senpai to become the Kampaku, Konoe Sakihisa’s adopted son is going forward....no matter how wise and clever this Juubei is, even as the ultimate princess Himekishi with noble lineage, I can’t match a god. As it is, Senpai will finally be snatched away....Different from Juubei who just wants to be Senpai’s lawful wife and does not mind him having any amount of lovers, Nobuna-sama only wants to monopolize. It’s ok for others to love him, but it can never be anything more. What should I do?”

What’s wrong Juubei-chan? As Yoshiharu tried to speak, at that moment Soken Temple’s stone wall suddenly collapsed and a large number of tourists were almost engulfed. It was an uproar.

Because too many tourists were crowding it, the stone walls that couldn’t endure it any more seemed to have collapsed.

“Oh no. It’s also a problem if too many people gather isn’t it. That was a solid stone wall.”

“I wonder if it was impossible because it was a rush job? I have to sink some of the budget into reinforcement work again. Oh, if any of the worshipers are injured nurse them carefully and I’ll pay in copper.”

“It’s an ill omen, sob sob.”

“Hieee!? No-no-nobuna-sama!? Heaven’s vengeance is coming down right now! If you keep playing around without moderation, next time you will seriously incur divine punishment!”

“Juubei is too religious. It was just an accident. The cause is that the stone walls that were made at top speed were too weak.”

Wearing new miko robes that she wasn't accustomed to, Frois who was serving as a Shinto priest at the entrance said "We had better regulate how many people we let enter at one time, Nobuna-sama" as she came out of the gate with a troubled face.

Oh, it's been a long time Frois-chan. Your miko clothes seem to be about to burst. Your chest is totally like a rocket battery! Yoshiharu instinctively made a lewd face, and Nobuna and Mitsuhide decided to hit him with a backfist at the same time.

"Nobuna-sama. Even though this is a festival, it feels like it's going too far. Azuchi Castle's castle tower is totally like the Tower of Babel that appeared in the Old Testament, and Soken Temple reminds me of the shrine in Jerusalem dedicated to a heathen god. Also having a missionary like me wear miko clothes is just a little odd. I hope nothing bad happens."

"Frois's fear of divine punishment is something like an occupational disease. Alright. I shall break through the second Oda encirclement by any means. Even if the state of affairs is grave, if all of the Oda clan unites it is surely possible!"

"Anyways, let's settle this situation, Nobuna-sama. If there are bad omens and rumors about Soken Temple it will have the opposite effect."

"Dearuka. I'll handle it with Juubei and Hanbei. Because Yoshimoto will just open up her fan and won't work even if she is here, please have tea with Rikyu in the Imperial Palace. Because Soken Temple's matchmaking is prohibited to men, Yoshiharu can walk through Azuchi town until evening."

"Eh? Then I'll have tea in the Imperial Palace too."

"No! You and Yoshimoto will not get involved in a relationship!"

"I can't?"

"What did you say! When I took my eyes off of you for a little bit you seduced Kobayakawa Takakage!"

"I, I didn't do such a thing? Because when I was in the Mori clan I had lost my memory...."

"No, no, nooooo! To begin with even if you do not make a pass at them, they'll involuntarily flock to you. Yoshiharu, you are kind to girls without thinking about the consequences!"

"It can't be helped, are you saying I should be callous to girls? Such a Sagara Yoshiharu is no longer Sagara Yoshiharu?"

“Oh no. This is the result of opening the Amano-Iwato. Because I have become a famous person that burns with love in a love affair with Yoshiharu...because of the Amano-Iwato, all the girls in the country seem to think of you as a man one hundred times cooler than you really are!”

As for the poor girl who sees Yoshiharu as cooler than he actually is, just me alone is enough in this world! It's aggravating!”

“Your possessiveness is really terrible....it's getting worse day by day.”

“That's right. Because I can't get married easily, I become short-tempered. And Yoshiharu is a cheater? From now on you are prohibited from having contact with a girl without my permission!”

“Woooooah, tyranicaaaaaa!”

“If this prohibition is broken, all of your territories will be confiscated. You will be forced to be a monk. You will be banished alone to Mt. Koya!”

“Mt. Koya? Give me a break! That's like telling me to maintain my virginity for my whole life?”

“Don't be greedy Saru. Because even I seem to be already going mad. But it would be terrible if I had a baby now right? As a Himekishi, I would have to postpone the battle until the baby is born?”

“Oh, oh? Y, yeah.”

“The good thing? If I defeat Uesugi, Takeda, and Mori, Tenka Fubu will be completed. I will have taken the world, and you will be the Kampaku Fujiwara Yoshiharu. If we reach the top together, we can even force a wedding, endure it until then!”

Hanbei. After all the form of happiness for Nobuna is ‘wanting everything - in other words, obtaining me and the world’ there doesn't seem to be anything other than this. No matter how I interject or intervene, even if I make an effort it doesn't seem like this will be changed, Yoshiharu sighed with teary eyes. Hanbei smiled with a troubled *giggle*.

That's right. The method of expressing love is different for each person too. If there is a love that continues giving freely, there is a love that continues demanding freely. Love is the very personality of the person. It's not something that is right or wrong – but I think that there is a starting point to solve the relationship that Nobuna-sama and Akechi-sama are entangled in.



“I was surprised at the fortitude that Yoshimoto-chan showed, but Hanbei also has a profound knowledge of the feelings of a girl in love. Though her younger appearance looks no different from Kanbei, why is she so much more of an adult?”

Until the night program to light up Azuchi Castle with paper lanterns and torches starts, I’m going to aimlessly stroll around the bottom of Azuchi Castle alone.

“However, I don’t want to burden Hanbei any more. I wish I was an elegant person who was sensitive and could understand the subtleties of a girl’s heart. Why do I have to be so simple-minded. I wonder if it is because I am a man after all? If I was a girl, even if I indiscriminately saved the lives of Himekishis, it wouldn’t be a problem. Still the idea of the bishojo Himekishi Sagara Yoshiharu is pretty disgusting. Shiver.”

He returned to the front gate while thinking about these things, as he walked down the slope headed for the town saying “did I even eat lunch?”, a blade was thrust suddenly at his back.

“Wh, what, ehrrrrrrh?”

Yoshiharu had also been trained in the Murakami Navy, and now had some confidence in his abilities.

This Yoshiharu is so disappointing -

To steal my back when my one specialty is to avoid attacks, who is this? A very skilled ninja?

It was carelessness. I should have anticipated that a spy from another country was mixed in with the tourists.

After being immersed in the dream like time spent with Nobuna in the castle tower, I forgot my usual wariness, Yoshiharu wanted to click his tongue at his own carelessness.

But still, who on earth is it?

“Sagara Yoshiharu. I visited Azuchi Castle thoroughly. That Soken Temple blasphemes the gods and Buddha. As the incarnation of Bishamonten, I can’t forgive that.”

The voice that was emitted by the assassin behind him was familiar to Yoshiharu.

“Uesugi, Kenshin?”

Chapter 3 – Holiday in Azuchi

A head cloth had been wound around Kenshin's head hiding her silver hair and pure snow-white skin, in order to completely make her celestial maiden-like features inconspicuous.

"I met you in Kyoto once. Sagara Yoshiharu, you are bold. Though you opened the Amano-Iwato and all of Japan memorized your face, you are alone in this town."

"Uesugi Kenshin, why are you in the town of Azuchi by yourself? This is Nobuna's territory. You will be killed if you are found."

"I came to Azuchi Castle, Oda Nobuna's last trump card. It is said that this castle was built to intercept Shingen and myself. However, what is this defenseless front gate? It is pointlessly broad and extends in a straight line. Oda Nobuna doesn't have the intention to defend Azuchi Castle. That Azuchi Castle is for our decisive battle, was it all a complete lie?"

Yoshiharu couldn't run away. Kenshin's arm was entwined around him and a blade was thrust secretly at his back so that people passing by couldn't see it. He had no choice but go down the major road while hearing Kenshin's words.

A sweet fragrance he had never smelled before was attacking Yoshiharu's nose.

Yoshiharu became aware of Kenshin's fragrance.

"It's impossible to deify oneself as a divine object. Moreover, the god of marriage. Is it a personal attack on me who has vowed to be celibate for my whole life? Oda Nobuna is provoking me by every conceivable means. Because it was intolerable, I accidentally destroyed the stone wall of Soken Temple."

"Did you do that!? How did you do that with your slender arm?"

Uesugi Kenshin. To infiltrate Azuchi alone after Kyoto, do you not feel fear? Or do you defeat your sense of fear by playing the biwa and uniting with Bishamonten?

When Uesugi Kenshin previously made an expedition to Kanto she fought against Hojo Ujiyasu in order to rescue her ally's castle, Karasawa Castle. While it was on the verge of falling as it was besieged by the army of 30,000 Hojo troops, she appeared in front of the Hojo army with only forty five soldiers.

At that time, Kenshin wasn't even wearing armor,

"Fate dwells in heaven. Armor is in your chest. Deeds rest at your feet."

She broke into the middle of Hojo's army of thirty thousand as a single horseman while chanting those words, and entered Karasawa Castle as if nothing happened.

It is said that no bullet fired or arrow shot by the Hojo soldiers touched Kenshin.

Even when surrounded and shot at by arrows from afar, they would not hit the Bishamonten, Kenshin.

Like this, the Hojo warriors that were skilled with the spear and summoned up their courage to attack Kenshin, were all cut down by the cross spear that Kenshin wielded.

The Hojo forces that were shown such an impossible sight became frightened saying "This person is like a Yaksha Rakshasa", and escaped to the left and right. It was as if the ground broke to make way for Kenshin.

The soldiers who received Kenshin after holding out the siege of Karasawa Castle were moved to tears saying "Bishamonten has truly descended". All of them threw away their lives, and fiercely launched themselves from the castle and repelled the Hojo army.

Appearing suddenly in the capital of Kyoto alone, and proclaiming a declaration of war to Nobuna, it was like that.

Neither an arrow nor a bullet can hit Kenshin.

Kenshin's own movements were agile and nimble too, but it was probably that Kenshin's overwhelming courage would surprise and frighten others and cause their shooting hands to fail. "I can't hit the incarnation of Bishamonten", you would only be able to accept Kenshin's explanation.

Nevertheless, to sneak into Azuchi Castle alone so soon after that, it could be said that Kenshin's bravery was almost aberrant.

There is a limit to bravery, Yoshiharu was past surprise and fear and felt deeply moved.

But, there was another person who was astonished by Kenshin's appearance here.

It was the ninja who serves Yoshiharu, Hachisuka Goemon.

"Sagara-shi! For me of all people, to be taken by surprise! I'll save you now!"

They had finished going down the major road, and were approaching one of the sections of the castle town that was out of the public's eye.

BANG!

All of the sudden, a smoke bomb exploded and Yoshiharu and Kenshin's vision became pure white.

"Goemon? It's dangerous to fight one on one against Uesugi Kenshin who neither bow nor gun can hit!"

"She is a warrior after all. But not matter how much swordplay you have learned, you can't endure the dexterity and sleight of hand of a Shinobi!"

Hachisuka Goemon rushed into the white smoke screen.

To see Goemon who had always been calm until now become panicked to this extent, Yoshiharu was shocked.

Because even though Goemon was standing guard, Uesugi Kenshin so easily caught my back, it was natural to become flustered.

"Hehehe. Nothing can be seen in the smoke screen! But it can be seen by a ninja! Uesugi Kenshin, give me your life!"

"A rowdy fellow. I don't need to see your figure."

"Wait Goemon! Don't murder a girl!"

"B, but Sagara-shi, if I hold back even slightly...oof?"

DON

Kenshin, while still holding Yoshiharu with one hand, knocked away Goemon's body that had rushed into the smoke with her other hand.

Kenshin's hand slowly turned, and it only looked like it barely touched Goemon's stomach.

When the white smoke was spread by the wind and Yoshiharu's sight returned, Goemon had been thrown against the clay wall and lost consciousness.

"...Unyu....m...mistake....Kenshin, remember this...gack"

It was an unbelievable scene.

"G, Goemon? It's a lie right? A ninja like Goemon. By a single blow that only barely touched her!?"

"I didn't take her life. But she will be unconscious for half a day."

“What frightening skill. I nearly killed her,” Kenshin muttered while releasing Yoshiharu.

“The figure of Goemon who had been completely defeated in a one-on-one fight in this way, it’s in my memory. You just touched her lightly, how....”

Ukyuu....while laying Goemon’s fainted body gently underneath a pine tree that was growing in the roadside trees, Yoshiharu who had witnessed Uesugi Kenshin’s abnormal strength was more amazed rather than surprised.

She is truly the god of war. The god of military arts.

“I just reversed the murderous intent of this ninja back on herself. But Sagara Yoshiharu, thanks to you yelling “*don’t murder her*”, the ninja’s murderous intent was weakened. That is why I didn’t take her life.”

“But, the smokescreen...”

“Smokescreens and blinding do not work on me. I naturally have poor eyesight. Especially in bright places. Because of that, my ears and nose are strong.”

“Is that so? Is the reason that a ninja like Goemon took a direct hit like that because she didn’t know that...”

Though at night when the sun has set I see like everyone else, Kenshin murmured.

That is why I wear this hood, to avoid the light of day. Because the light of the day is like a poison for I who does not have any skin color.”

“I see. In future language, you are weak to ultraviolet rays. The sunlight is also strong today, isn’t it hard?”

“I wanted to discover the weak spot of Azuchi Castle and see it with my own eyes at any cost. Before, when Hojo Ujijasu holed up in Odawara Castle during the siege, I was not able to take down that big castle. I was born physically weak, I can’t last on the battlefield for a month. If that “time of the month” comes, I’ll be attacked by intense pain and nausea and won’t be able to get up. Therefore my tactics are always a prompt strike for a decisive battle. With the Azuchi Castle attack, I didn’t want to repeat the same mistakes as the attack on Odawara Castle.”

Yoshiharu was amazed.

To talk about all of the secrets that must not be told to an enemy, the defenselessness of Kenshin was too much.

Completely like a child.

At the same time, while she boasted unrivaled, overwhelming, undefeated strength on the battlefield, she must also have been swallowed up by Takeda Shingen's and Hojo Ujiyasu's schemes many times over, he understood this fact.

"Uesugi Kenshin. You are talking too much about your weak points. I am an Oda house vassal, Sagara Yoshiharu. I am your enemy right?"

"...Oh, I forgot. Because you babbled out such a strange thing like "don't kill". Sagara Yoshiharu, are you possibly a tactician equal to Takeda Shingen?"

"No. You are just too honest!"

For now I will say thank you, Sagara Yoshiharu. Kenshin bowed her head.

Despite being the God of War Bishamonten, when she bowed it was like she was a *teru teru bozu*, Yoshiharu thought.

"Why bow?"

"I have decided not to kill people in any place other than the battlefield. Because the ninja was too strong and I couldn't go easy on her, I was going to break my oath of no killing. Who on earth is this child?"

"Oh. Then you didn't have the intent to kill me from the beginning?"

"Yes. Oda Nobuna's end will come in a grand battle. Bishamonten does not perform cowardly surprise attacks."

Kenshin grabbed and waved the thing that had been thrust at Yoshiharu's back.

At first, when Yoshiharu had been taken by surprise he had imagined that it was a knife, but it was bamboo.

"That's right. You are indeed Uesugi Kenshin. So then, why did you capture me? Were you going to hold me as a hostage and take me back to Echigo?"

"Bishamonten won't use such cowardly plans. I entered a daze, I seem to have hung around the inside of the castle too much. As for this ninja, she had been keeping an eye out for hooligans."

"That is because you appeared in the teahouse in Kyoto that one time."

"Therefore, until a member of the Echigo army comes to pick me up in the middle of the night, I want to stay with you. While traveling the town of Azuchi. If I pretend to be an attendant to Sagara Yoshiharu, I won't be suspected right?"

Huh. I got it, I understand. I also owe you for not killing Goemon, Yoshiharu nodded.

“You are a surprisingly soft hearted person. Aren’t you afraid? I am Oda Nobuna’s mortal enemy, the god of war, Uesugi Kenshin of Echigo?”

“I’m not scared? On the other hand it’s luck. You personally came alone to discover a method to capture Azuchi Castle that would give you an advantage, and I may even discover a precious weak point of the unrivaled undefeated god of war today. There probably won’t be a second chance?”

“I spoke about my weak points just now. But I won’t lose even if they are known.”

“What amazing self-confidence. But what will be my reward as a member of the Oda clan? It doesn’t feel like it is Bishamonten’s style to spy on the enemy territory and threaten me so I will work all day to help you escape? Something small should be fine.”

“You are nervy. But that is correct. Then if I see you on the battlefield, you can take fifty steps without being instantly killed by the army. Only once.”

Again, what amazing self-confidence, Yoshiharu smiled wryly.

“But as expected of Uesugi Kenshin, to keep your eye on your opponent. Even if I walk down the road with a cute girl, nobody will notice. ‘Sagara-sama’s women loving habit has been activated’ they’ll say and smile wryly.”

“...Huh. The rumor of the world’s number one ladies’ man is true. I won’t forgive you if you do anything strange. ‘I want to play as your sweetheart’, I will never speak such obscene words. Because I have made an oath of celibacy to myself. If I fell in love, wouldn’t I lose the qualifications to be Bishamonten and die? Though it is absolutely impossible for me to fall in love with a reprehensible philanderer like you, I can’t die until I defeat Oda Nobuna.”

“Still, *“Let’s pretend to be lovers. That would be the least suspicious.”* What would happen if I insisted?”

Kenshin swung the bamboo in her hand, and a deep crack appeared in the pine planted on the roadside.

“Even if the opponent has no hostility or urge to kill, a feat of this degree is possible. Your body will also become like this. This place isn’t a battlefield, but if it’s for the purpose of protecting my oath of celibacy, I won’t pardon any man that attempts to do some obscene action to me. An unavoidable measure.”

This will prove fatal if I make a careless action, Yoshiharu trembled.

“Then pretend to be my younger sister. Recently I have gained more younger sisters for the sake of cultivating human resources. Sakichi Ishida, Otani Norinosuke, Toranosuke Kato, Fukushima Ichimatsu. Your hooded appearance, I can trick people if I insist that you are Otani Norinosuke. Because Norinosuke always covers her face with a white mask, her real face isn’t widely known. Not only are you petite and look like a *teru teru bozu*, you also look similar to Norinosuke from a distance.”

“I see. That’s perfect. I wonder if this is also Bishamonten’s power.”

“That is why, please call me ‘Ani-kun’ for today. That is what Norinosuke calls me.”

“...Because I have some unpleasant memories of an older brother, may I just call you Yoshiharu?”

Kenshin’s profile when she said the word older brother, it looked very lonely, Yoshiharu felt very cold.

“That’s right. Because I forced my older brother to retire from the world, because I took the birthright and Kasuga Castle away from my older brother. At this point, I don’t have the qualifications to be somebody’s younger sister.”

Kenshin seemed annoyed as they advanced through the great throngs of people pushing and shoving to walk through the boisterous Azuchi, her arm linked with Yoshiharu’s. “Although today is the O-bon Festival to send the souls of the dead, it is very lively. Does nobody believe that the Echigo army will attack Azuchi?”

“The people who live around Kyoto are used to wars, they have guts. They are enjoying the present so they can become serious later.”

“Stop the idle talk. In these innumerable tourists, many shinobi have been mixed in. Not only the Shinobi of the Oda, but also the ruffians of Takeda and Hojo’s Fuma. Sagara Yoshiharu, don’t separate from me. Please continue the act of being siblings that get along well.”

“If we get along well, shouldn’t we be talking freely?”

They approached the street where flashy street stalls were lined up in a succession.

“Takoyaki~. Sakai’s specialty fried takoyaki~. Oh Yoshiharu-san, traveling with one of your younger sisters? Here young lady, feel free to have some takoyaki. At a discount.”

“Oh, is Imai Sokyu-ossan still doing business? Do your best. Give us two servings!”

“Thank you very much, Yoshiharu-san. The sales will be over soon. The snow-white younger sister, where are you from?”

“Um. I came from a snowy district of Echigo.”

“Hah? Echigo? A headgear like a teru teru bozu covering your face... young lady, I feel like I’ve seen you somewhere....”

“Um. Imai Sokyu. When I visited the capital before, I met you in Sakai. This is troublesome.”

“Shh, shh! Norinosuke, don’t say such unnecessary things! S, see you Ossan!”

Yoshiharu left Imai Sokyu’s stand in a hurry while pulling Kenshin’s hand.

“How can you just blurt that out! Aren’t you giving away your true identity! It looks like you completely can’t lie or pretend at all!”

“Um. Bishamonten cannot tell a lie. Because I am different from a person like Takeda Shingen who is a lump of lies from head to foot.”

“Well no wonder! You would be pulled in by the tactics and schemes of a door to door salesman, such a concept seems to be entirely missing from you. You might be the god of war, but you really are a sheltered princess. I give up.”

“But, because you can’t move when there is no information about the enemy country, the espionage activities are being done on the buildings by the Nokizaru. So. I like the Nokizaru.”

“S, Suddenly a confession to me? Without using lies or tactics, as one would expect of you.”

Oh, Kenshin’s white cheeks became red.

“I, it’s different! Not you! The Nokizaru and the Sagara saru are different!”

“Oh. My heart almost stopped when I thought you were confessing.”

“I will die the moment I confess my love to a man. I was taught this by Bishamonten. Thus, you asked such a leading question to murder me who is Oda Nobuna’s mortal enemy. Truly a schemer.”

“You weren’t murdered by Takeda Shingen though.”

“Yes. That woman lives to obstruct me, but she will not try to murder me. I believe it is because she can’t say she won if she doesn’t kill me in a battle. That it is the tacit promise exchanged between Takeda Shingen and I. But, that woman fans the riots in Ecchu and plots against the inhabitants of Echigo, any kind of trick short of murder! Truly cowardly.”

“Really. When you talk about Katsuchiyo-chan, you seem really happy.”

“W, what are you saying? I can’t be pleased! She is unbearably hateful!”

In the corner of the street, there was a mascot being ganged up on by several children.

“Uuu, I want to dance with the sisters in the Namban temple. B, but, this is Leon’s duty today. Haii, I’m Azuchi Daichi! Hey, hey. Children! Stop it, please stop it! Divine punishment will come down on this Azuchi to those who gang up on others! Stoooooop!”

“Sagara Yoshiharu. Look, a weak person is being bullied. I must carry out justice. With this bamboo, the children will be scattered...”

“Because your true identity will come out if you vacuum cut with the bamboo, stop it. And besides, that is the job of the local mascot. It includes being beaten up by children.”

“Such a violent program isn’t good. The children will become warlike in the future.”

“I can’t think of that as the words of the god of war.”

“Don’t misunderstand. I am not a lover of war like Takeda Shingen. I only carry out my crusade to crush the strong and help the weak. But, this time I need to tread upon the countries that are in my path to invade the capital...”

The profile of Kenshin who lowered her eyebrows seemed to be very sad.

“For today, let’s forget about things like Bishamonten and battles. We’ll be suspected by the ninjas. Let’s eat some takoyaki! Here, here!”

“Umu...it’s hot! Hot! Hah, hah, hah. W, what is this? Isn’t it hot!? Please don’t press it to my lips suddenly! So Sagara Yoshiharu, you are trying to assassinate me with takoyaki.”

“It must be terrible to have a cat’s tongue. I’m sorry. Eat it after this. Foo, foo.”

“...Uuu. What is this sticky white failed soy sauce? It’s greasy and doesn’t seem like it will pass through my throat. There are few things which I can eat.”

“If you have an unbalanced diet, you won’t grow taller and your breasts won’t expand.”

“Obscene person! T, to say such indecent words to the Bishamonten, there won’t be a next time!”

“Oh. Sorry, sorry. Though you look young, your age isn’t that different from mine? I’ll be careful.”

“I have never seen such a rude gentleman like you. You are relentless in your treatment of younger girls.”

Muu, Kenshin who became sullen and looked the other way was too easy to understand, Yoshiharu smiled wryly.

While Kenshin had downcast eyes and became sullen, she unexpectedly entwined her arm with Yoshiharu’s even tighter with more strength.

“...Although I’m reluctant, the signs of the ninja are becoming stronger. If a fight starts here, many people would become involved. Can’t we hide in a place that is out-of-the-way?”

“I think Nobuna stationed the ninjas with the objective of keeping the security and sending home all of the tourists safely. I don’t think they will battle inside the crowd.”

“Having said that, if the numbers are slowly gathered and manage to surround us, I will have to break through using any means.

“I, I understand. It’s our long-awaited Azuchi Festival. Let’s go without extra trouble. Over there is just right. Is that place a good hiding place? It’s out of sight.”

Yoshiharu pointed ahead, not at a brand-new building, but at a dilapidated house that was dirty all over and had deteriorated until it looked like it would collapse.

“Hie? H, h, haunted house?”

Kenshin held onto Yoshiharu’s strong arm. This time it wasn’t an act.

A signboard had been built over the deserted house’s entrance.

The Mysterious Grand Enryakuji Temple! Haunted House! Now that Enryakuji Temple’s boundary against evil has been broken, it has been attacked by the vengeful ghosts that were sealed by the Tendai sect!

That is a really long name for an attraction, Yoshiharu wanted to complain. One of the former armed monks of Enryakuji Temple could be seen standing in an imposing stance at the entrance with a hearty smile. *Oh, is that ossan the producer?* He understood.

“Oh, is it Sagara Yoshiharu-dono!? You became very strong!”

“Ossan lost his malice. Or rather, mellowed out.”

“Since I saw my mother in Frois-sama, I became a benevolent man. But since our monetary offerings haven’t been collected since the armed monk corps was dismissed in Enryakuji Temple, today is a business trip in Azuchi. How about this haunted house, don’t you

think the signboard which meticulously explains the purpose of the haunted house is really easy to understand!”

“Rather than saying that the donations aren’t being collected, isn’t it instead that since the threat of the armed monks can no longer work, you can’t write off your debts to the merchants anymore?”

“Gahahaha! You got me there! There is also that reason!”

Whatever. I didn’t know.

“Did the monks of Enryakuji Temple commit improper acts? They must be punished.” Because Kenshin was about to swing her bamboo, Yoshiharu hastily drew Kenshin’s waist close to restrain her.

“Yipe!” Kenshin let out a small scream, but power didn’t seem to enter her body, and she became stiff and shook when she was drawn close.

“S, Stop Sagara Yoshiharu. Touching too much, too close. Who do you think I am...”

“Not Sagara Yoshiharu. Ani-kun. Ani-kun.”

“I remember. Uuu~”

“Gousei-ossan, this child is Otani Norinosuke. My new younger sister. I am bringing her up as the core of the future Sagara corps. While this girl is ignorant of the world, deep down she is a gentle and good girl overflowing with a sense of justice.”

“Ooooooh! Was that it? She seems like an extremely shy girl to completely hide her face with a mask and white hood. Please, by all means enter for free. Let’s reserve it for no one else but Sagara-dono for awhile. Gahahah.”

“Much appreciated.”

Kenshin gave a courteous bow. Because her figure seemed like a teru teru bozu, Yoshiharu almost began to laugh.

“Alright? Young lady, I feel like I have met you somewhere before for some reason....the feeling is very different from the maternal feeling that comes from Frois but it feels very nostalgic....mmm? Possibly my imagination? I secluded myself in Enryakuji Temple and devoted myself earnestly to military arts and went crazy over alcohol, I should be a man who has no relation to women.”

“Um. Shoukakuin Gousei. I met you many times. When I was born in Kasuga Castle. And when I threw away the position of the daimyo of Echigo and tried to run away to Enryakuji Temple....”

“Awawawawawa. Come come into the haunted house Norinosuke! We’ll enter Gousei-ossan!”

“What did you say? S, stop Sagara Yoshiharu. I, I am weak to ghosts...it doesn’t mean I’m afraid. B, Bishamonten being afraid of ghosts is impossible. But something like a dead person....it’s the O-bon Festival today, a ghost might really appear?”

Kenshin who was scared for some reason and was shaking and trembling, was forcibly picked up in a princess carry by Yoshiharu and plunged into the haunted house.

“L, let go of me! IYA!”

While lifting the body of the surprisingly light Kenshin and racing into the small dark hallway of the haunted house, “Then when you meet someone you have met before, don’t flippantly speak about your true identity! Learn how to pretend for a while!” Yoshiharu cried.

The two of them rushed into a dark room at the end.

“Hie....oh, it’s pitch black. Smoke is even drifting like fog. E, even I can see it. I see it. T, this room is just like a graveyard. It is full of grave markers....oh, oh, the gravestone over there was smashed with a sword. Oh, Oh, there is something sinister all around. Such a curse....”

“Kenshin has good night vision? Because I can’t see well in dim light, I’m not that frightened. Gousei-ossan isn’t around anymore, I’ll let you down soon?”

“Stop! Please don’t let go! If my foot touches the ground, I might be grabbed by the ghosts! Sagara Yoshiharu, please hold me in your arms until we leave this haunted house!”

She clung to the nape of his neck with a Giyuuu.

Kenshin’s fragrance casually flowed into the depths of his nose.

“It is surprising that Gousei-ossan who seems to be so crude would be resourceful enough to make such an elaborate haunted house. It is also unexpected that Uesugi Kenshin is afraid of ghosts. Aren’t you Bishamonten? The self-styled god is afraid of ghosts, it’s amusing.”

“Nothing is funny. But among the dead there is a person who would want to meet me even as a ghost, a person I want to never meet. When the person I absolutely never want to meet has already become a ghost, my self-defense arts won’t work. I wouldn’t know what to do.”

“Personally, I think you already don’t have any self-defense. You are being casually held, and even in a princess carry?”

“T, this, is only to protect me from ghosts, I intentionally let you carry me. If I felt like it, Sagara Yoshiharu, I could instantly kill you at any time right?”

“Yeah, yeah. Protect, protect. Since Bishamonten won’t bully the weak, I am relieved.”

“Also. Are you a man!? Everything you do is infuriating! The worst man who combines all of the rudeness of Nagao Masakage, the arrogance of Naoe Yamato, and the happy-go-lucky nature of Sadamitsu Usami! I’ll remember this!”

Before she knew it, Kenshin’s expression and tone became one appropriate for a girl of her age.

Sadamitsu Usami, Naoe Yamato, Nagao Masakage. All of them are famous military commanders of Echigo. I’d like to meet them.”

“...All three of them have already died. When I met with Gousei again, I remembered various things. I’d like to meet the ghost of Naoe and Usami. Masakage’s ghost would be unpleasant.”

Kenshin’s voice, Yoshiharu’s shoulder that was connected to his arm shook.

“Is that so? Talk of the dead is for another time. Today, let us enjoy the festival of Azuchi.”

He quietly petted the small head that was covered by the cloth hat.

“D, don’t treat me like a child. Sagara Yoshiharu. Don’t stroke the head of the controller of Kanto, the Daimyo of Echigo, so easily. If the many generals of Echigo who worship me as the Bishamonten saw me, it would be a bloodbath. You seem to have totally forgotten it, but aren’t you my enemy?”

“Because today you are my younger sister, Otani Norinosuke, it’s fine. By the way. Because it is good for killing time, do you want to slowly go around the house?”

“Turn around sharply. This is the Bishamonten’s order.”

“Be careful to not faint on the way Kenshin. Konjac hanging by a thread will hit the back of your neck, a wet woman will suddenly jump from a well, they might be doing stuff like that?”

“I, I have sharp night vision. B, because I can see completely through those traps, there is no problem.”

While being held in a princess carry by Yoshiharu as he walked through the haunted house, Kenshin began talking about the memories of the three men who left before her.

“As for me. Two vassals raised me since I was young as substitute parents – while being carried on the shoulders of the tactician Usami Sadamitsu and the Prime Minister, Yamato Naoe, I had my sickly older brother hand over the position of the daimyo of Echigo. It can be said that I stole it. Because Nagao Masakage was a vulgar man like a wild animal, and that fellow damaged the Echigo’s branch family, it was unavoidable. Nagao Masakage wasn’t satisfied only with marrying my older sister, but was going to snatch Echigo from my older brother.

After my older sister, he was going to try to take me, the younger sister. Truly hateful. Not only Nagao Masakage. Many of Echigo’s samurai harbored the ambition to marry me and become the daimyo of Echigo and continually rebelled.”

“...Although you are a Himekishi, aren’t you their lord? The vassal can’t marry the lord. It was supposed to be the law of the Warring States.”

“In Echigo which was a country of only male warriors, there weren’t any Himekishis. I was the first Himekishi. Therefore Echigo didn’t have such a law....but Usami and Naoe assisted and protected me. If I hadn’t made an oath of celibacy, I might have been defiled. Especially by Nagao Masakage. While marrying my older sister and having a child, to then go after the younger sister...I hate it. As expected, men are like wild animals. Killing people while laughing on the battlefield, covered in blood, and then are savage to women...no. I hate it. Truthfully, I’m scared of men. I’m afraid, I don’t want that.”

Yoshiharu silently stroked Kenshin’s head as she closed her eyes tightly and shook quietly.

“When I met Takeda Shingen at Kawanakajima, I thought I found the light of salvation for the first time. I believed I had found a lifelong companion. For some reason, I was attracted to Shingen whose personality was the complete opposite of mine. But Takeda Shingen was a woman like me. If either of us was a man, Kai and Echigo might have been united in an alliance by marriage. But both of us were Himekishis. And Shingen was never going to abandon her ambition to annex Shinano by force. I didn’t understand. All the people who were driven out of Shinano by Shingen demanded help from me. To continue fighting for the sake of justice is my fate as Bishamonten. If Shingen does not stop her aggressive war, I have to give Shingen the death penalty through my holy war. So Echigo and Kai had no choice but to keep fighting over Shinano and Kawanakajima.”

“I see. Still, there was a bond of friendship between you and Shingen. Did you try to run away to Enryakuji Temple because your destiny to keep fighting against Shingen in Kawanakajima became painful?”

“In addition to that, I also became fed up with Nagao Masakage’s disgusting courtship in Echigo and couldn’t bear it anymore. Whenever I would decline courtship offers, those guys would raise revolts and rebellion in my castle. It occurred in Echigo repeatedly, again and again.”

“That’s terrible. You are too beautiful. You are a unique girl and there isn’t another like you in this world....no substitute anywhere.”

“...Even if you say such a thing, I won’t be happy.”

“Was Nagao Masakage always the central figure of the rebellion? You should have banished that guy. Even if Nobuna forgave it once, after a second rebellion they would be exiled to Mt. Koya.

Even I was dismissed and expelled too.”

“Well. Even the ever-tolerant Sadamitsu Usami, said I had no choice but to banish Nagao Masakage. The ruthless Yamato Naoe recommended that I execute Masakage. But I couldn’t do either. Justice and mercy in one body. You must not murder a person who you defeated in war. And Masakage was my older sister’s husband. If I banished him, I would also have to banish my older sister. It is the mission of Bishamonten to defeat villains, and reform them into a virtuous person. So I kept fighting, winning, and forgiving. And yet, each time I forgave and forgave him, Nagao Masakage became more stuck-up. Every time he was pardoned by me, he got even more angry.”

However, there was a point that I could feel sympathy for Masakage. Naoe Yamato thought up a plan to get him married. He was made to marry my older sister, and was included into the head family. Naoe protected me, but it left a very bad aftertaste for Masakage, Kenshin let out a deep sigh.

“As a result, you were exhausted from the series of battles in Kawanakajima and the rebellions in Echigo, and so you threw away your position as the daimyo of Echigo and ran away alone to Enryakuji Temple. A child with a sense of responsibility as strong as you, you tried to throw away your position completely. It was truly harsh.”

Kenshin sniffled a little.

Because it is shameful, please don’t look at me right now, she implored in a thin voice.

“Because I have poor night vision, it’s alright. Did you meet Gousei-ossan in Enryakuji Temple?”

“Yes. In Enryakuji Temple, I was stopped by the monk Gousei. Enryakuji Temple is prohibited to women, even if you become a monk, you will live your life as an outcast. He would not quit being the head priest of the Tendai Sect. I was not used to the social position of the

armed monks either. So it is difficult to show justice in these chaotic times. To have the power to show justice while choosing the path of the monk, if that is the case Mt. Koya is better. In the case of Mt. Koya, it doesn't have the law prohibiting women like Enryakuji Temple. So I left Enryakuji Temple and the capital to far away Kii. I went to Mt. Koya. Now that I think about it, Gousei was buying time. Buying time to call the men from Echigo."



While running away to Mt. Koya, Uesugi Kenshin hadn't yet succeed the Kanto administrator Uesugi house, and was introducing herself as "Nagao Kagetora."

Because Kenshin (Kagetora) is a woman, she couldn't climb to the summit of Mt. Koya immediately.

In a small one room temple at the foot of the mountain, she entered discussions with the abbot asking "please allow me to enter the priesthood."

However the discussions didn't progress.

Without being defeated in battle, and without losing a country, that the "Dragon of Echigo", the young daimyo of Echigo that was feared as being unrivaled with an undefeated record, fled her country and abandoned her social position in the samurai family to become a priest was unprecedented. It also perplexed the Mt. Koya monks that the daimyo was a Himekishi.

However they couldn't handle Kagetora roughly.

Kagetora had gone to the capital the previous year and had an audience with Himiko and the Yamato Goshō. The Kampaku, Sakihisa Konoe, and the other nobles present were captivated by the divinity that spilled from her, her distinctive features, and her eloquent speech. The master swordsman that stood at the summit of the Muromachi Shogunate, Ashikaga Yoshiteru, was deeply impressed saying "you are a hero of these chaotic times" and "if you subjugate evil and let righteousness be known, when the time comes you will lead the Echigo army under the shogunate's control and become the ruler of the whole country". She was, so to speak, the military commander who was closest to ruling the whole country and was requested to return to the capital leading her soldiers.

That Kagetora would throw away everything secular and desire to be a priest was incomprehensible to the monks, Enryakuji Temple's Shoukakuin Gousei urged her "You are that lady that shows the people justice through the military arts, you mustn't become a priest until these chaotic times are over", and prolonged the discussions and bought time.

The excessively honest Kagetora didn't understand the situation behind the scenes.

While swinging her bamboo and waiting for the day that she can ascend the mountain -

Both the strategist of Echigo, Usami Sadamitsu, and the prime minister, Naoe Yamato came.

Usami Sadamitsu had a tall figure but was an unfashionable man that always had sleepy eyes. He had been raising Kagetora to be an elegant person as “Echigo’s first Himekishi” since she was young.

Usami Sadamitsu who had his clan destroyed in battle against Echigo and Kagetora’s father Nagao Tamekage and spent time as a vagrant possessed a strange conviction. “It is the survival of the fittest, Echigo can’t be run by a rough male commander.” The chaotic era won’t end through battle. It’s useless unless we have a Himekishi that is like the goddess worshiped by Honbyo Temple’s followers.

The girl that matched his ideal was Kagetora.

“Kagetora. Isn’t it fine now. We were wrong! What is the reason for your fit this time? Me? Was my rabbit crest bad? Or was it your long hair? Could it possibly be that? Oh. It became your time of the month and you ran away so I wouldn’t notice? Oh, there is such a thing because you are a Himekishi. Just come home. Everyone in Echigo, both the commanders and the people, are troubled.”

Although Usami Sadamitsu advocated his favorite rabbit crest and wasn’t good at understanding a girl’s mind or proper time and place, he was usually one of the few men that Kagetora could truly forgive in her heart. But this time he finally enraged Kagetora.

“Usami! I didn’t run away for such childish reasons! I have already become disgusted of the male samurai of Echigo! Whenever there is an opening, ‘I want you to let me make you my bride, let me do it, bear my child,’ all of the guys are like filthy beasts! Who am I? Aren’t I the daimyo of Echigo, Nagao Kagetora? Why do the men not recognize me as their official master?”

Ah...that is, Kagetora. It’s because you are woman who is too beautiful. It is the destiny of human men to worship, Usami scratched his head helplessly, and had a short tea break.

“At the beginning of our battle at Kawanakajima, I was completely disgusted by Nagao Masakage. When that fellow holds wicked thoughts towards you, the other men are stirred up as well. It becomes a vicious cycle. I’ll do it this way. I will create a suitable plot, and you will banish Nagao Masakage. If that fellow disappears, will you come back to Echigo?”

“Don’t say such stupid things Usami! I can’t banish the husband of my elder sister! Or are you also going to banish my elder sister from Echigo?”

But Kagetora. As long as you remain single, this turmoil will continue. When you who grew up into a beauty grows older the situation will change, but that story is a long way off...Usami scratched at his head some more while drinking the bitter tea. Kagetora became increasingly displeased to see the dandruff gently falling.

“Rather, you’ll have to withdraw your vow of celibacy. Why must you not have a husband if you are the incarnation of Bishamonten?”

“That’s foolish. If I do such a thing I will die. When I fall in love with a man, I’ll die. When father died, Bishamonten appeared before me and said so.”

“Uh, Kagetora. That is just the illusion of your own heart saying so. Even I can do an imitation of Bishamonten. Look, look. Look at my favorite stuffed bunny. Let’s talk to the bunny now. “Ku, usagi-chan! I am friends with Bishamonten! Kage-chan, return home! If Kage-chan isn’t there, Kasugayama will be very lonely!””

“.....”

Kagetora silently grabbed the stuffed rabbit that Usami was puppeteering, and and threw it off the porch to the bottom of the cliff.

“UWAAAAAA!?! WHAT HAVE YOU DOOOOONE!?! USA-CHAN!?! I’LL GO AND GET YOU BAAAACK! THIS IS STUFFED ANIMAL MURDER!”

“When I see a rabbit, I remember my appearance in a mirror and it becomes unpleasant.”

“Why does it become unpleasant? You who has become such a beautiful woman, growing into a beauty that everyone envies, you think it is stupid? What a waste!”

“Usami. If I marry someone, Echigo will become even more turbulent than now. The Nagao household and the vassal corps will be divided, all of the Echigo townspeople will be left adrift, and the farmers will lose their fields and starve to death. If you doubt it, will you try to be my husband?”

“Hah? I am something like your big brother, don’t say something stupid. Oh. It has been difficult to handle you since you reached marriageable age, Kagetora. I miss the little girl that was called Torachiyo.”

“You and Naoe Yamato brought me up this way. You taught me the thing called righteous war, and Naoe Yamato showed me the ways of Buddha to forgive the enemy with mercy. I have practiced both. Why are you complaining now?”

“That’s right...I apologize for the adults who forced our selfish dreams and ideal on you from a young age. However. If you become the incarnation of Bishamonten when you fall in love you’ll die, such nonsense is from neither myself nor Naoe. Kagetora, you started to tell yourself that when you lost your father in battle. I think now, that when you began to equate yourself with Bishamonten, I should have knocked you down and corrected you....at that time it possibly might have made it worse. Such a gallant child, I was moved. It’s unexpected, that you would become a troublesome girl who won’t allow a man to come near when you reached marriageable age and who secludes herself in Bishamondo to communicate with Bishamonten.”

“I should have let Kagetora read the ‘Tale of Genji’ before she became the God of War Bishamonten, no, in fact Hikaru Genji’s very existence was needed,” Usami grumbled while blowing his nose.

“Hey Naoe! Stop eavesdropping and come out! You do something!”

“Dear me! If it’s the role of quelling Ojou-sama’s frustration, it should be you Usami-sama. Isn’t it my job to speak harshly and say things bluntly that anger Ojou-sama?”

A thin man with pale cheeks – Naoe Yamato reluctantly entered the room.

Echigo’s prime minister.

He also experienced the bitterness of having his whole family ruined due to wars with Echigo. However he saw a different hope in Kagetora than Usami.

Originally Naoe Yamato found a resourcefulness and divinity equal to Buddha in Kagetora, and advised her to become a priest. He was opposed by Usami Sadamitsu who suggested that she become a samurai.

The tender-hearted Kagetora wasn’t able to discard either of them. She inherited both dreams the two men had together.

Abandoning the way of life of a human, taking a vow of celibacy and living an isolated life as Bishamonten, pursuing a righteous war to take back order and righteousness in a Japan that had lost it, Kagetora shouldered such difficulties.

Naoe Yamato made up his mind to give everything in his life to such a Kagetora, and personally declared that he would be a bachelor for life and go through life single.

The person who had the achievement of protecting the defenseless child from the ways of erotic love of Nagao Masakage who sticks to Kagetora, it was this Naoe Yamato.

After all, it was Naoe Yamato who used foul play to get Nagao Masakage to marry Kagetora’s older sister as a way to restrain Masakage.

Kagetora can’t be forcibly snatched any more by Masakage as she is his ‘wife’s younger sister’, he could say that now.

“Naoe Yamato. Did you come too? Kagetora won’t return to Echigo anymore. Both of you, go home immediately!”

“Ojou-sama. You can’t be a priest of Mt. Koya. I will even stop you using my resources. I have already begun appealing to the Yamato Goshō and the Shogunate. Konoe Sakihisa-sama

and Ashikaga Yoshiteru-sama have already become extremely upset. In the capital of Kyoto they are making a fuss like the end of the world has come.”

“Naoe. You are always like that! Sneakily making preparations behind my back! A samurai should fight openly like a samurai family!”

“Huhuhu, this is my style. Ojou-sama? There are only two solutions we can reach here.”

“What is the first?”

“Take the bet of whether or not Echigo falls, and get married to Usami-sama. If another person became your husband Echigo will split apart, Usami-sama is unexpectedly suitable and everyone will say “my sympathies, Usami-sama is now henpecked by Kagetora-sama.” While sympathizing with you, everyone might give up.”

Usami Sadamitsu spat out his tea. Kagetora’s complexion turned from blue to red and the bamboo in her hand began to shake violently.

“A-a-a-a-absolutely not! I would rather become a priest than break my oath of celibacy!”

“The other plan is to give up becoming a priest and return as the daimyo of Echigo while protecting your vow of celibacy. Many of Echigo’s generals would have learned their lesson a little with this. But, even if you return to Kasugayama castle empty-handed as is, something like this will soon happen again. The man with evil intentions who will try to make Ojou-sama his will come out by any means. Even if it’s prohibited and forbidden, the beings called humans will desire the forbidden fruit.”

“I know that! So let me hear what you would do, Naoe!”

“Assassinate the man who is the head of the family members obsessed with Ojou-sama, Nagao Masakage-sama. Forgiving evil, forgiving rebellion, but killing only the person who tries to violate the divine incarnation of Bishamonten, show it to the the vassal corps. Thus Echigo will be unified.”

Naoe Yamato, a man who would calmly get involved in any conspiracy if it was for the sake of Kagetora.

Different in some respects from the clever Usami, he could be said to be a bureaucrat of the realist faction.

While Kagetora trembled in anger, with a snap she hit Naoe Yamato’s shoulder with the bamboo.

“Assassinate my older sister’s husband? Bishamonten would never approve such cowardly actions. I will become a villain equal to Takeda Shingen!”

“It is said that two great men cannot coexist. Unless I have Nagao Masakage who aims at Ojou-sama and the position of daimyo of Echigo die, Ojou-sama will not truly become the head of Echigo.”

“Absolutely not that. It...I can't do that!”

“Oh. By any chance does Ojou-sama hate that man? The reason you can't kill him is merely because he is the husband of your older sister.”

“Naoe Yamato! You always try to manipulate my heart in this way! No matter what you say, that is the skill you use! It isn't your true feelings! I have grown accustomed to it! I will never approve of assassination! But if I return to Echigo like this, I'll run away again. I also know that! Torachiyo, no, Kageitora, I don't want to come into contact with men anymore! I don't want you to swear your loyalty! While hiding the ugly lustful desire to defile me behind a sham of offering loyalty, that is a man! The exceptions are only you two, Kageie Kakizaki, and an extremely few others. I won't return to Echigo!”

Persuading Ojou-sama will be difficult this time, a man like Naoe Yamato broke into a cold sweat and groaned.

“What to do, Usami-sama?”

“If it comes to this, should we marry you to Kageie Kakizaki? That fellow is more fixated on Buddha than Bishamonten.”

“No. Whoever the partner is, Ojou-sama won't consent to it. Because she has obstinately become convinced that if she falls in love she will die.”

“Naoe! It is because you brainwashed her into taking a vow of celibacy! For now you need to stop being a lifelong bachelor! Go marry someone!”

If you, her sworn friend and ally give up being a lifelong bachelor, Kageitora may also change her mind.”

“I refuse. If I abandon my oath of being single for my life that I adopted as proof of my loyalty to Ojou-sama, I will be reduced to just an ordinary, cold-blooded, underhanded prime-minister. Excuse me from that. If it is for Ojou-sama I will completely dirty my hands. It is against my aesthetics to abandon this one point.”

Every one of these guys....this is why all of these people who are crazy about god and Buddha are troublesome...ugh...while Usami was gnashing his teeth, the “third man” who nobody expected stepped in suddenly.

A toned muscular body.

Thick black eyebrows.

A glint in his eye like a hungry wolf.

The man who, while married to Kagetora's sister, is an ambitious military commander still obsessed with Kagetora.

"Nagao Masakage? Wait a minute. Why have you come?"

"You should have been left as Echigo's deputy daimyo. You could take over Echigo in our absence, why are you in Mt. Koya?"

"...Don't come near me, Nagao Masakage! Attempting to get both sisters together, it is the act of a beast! You even gained a child with older sister! Shameless. Go back to elder sister!"

Kagetora whose feelings were disturbed intensely cursed Masakage.

"You already took my older sister as your wife! Know that there is never a day that you can obtain this Kagetora alive!"

Nagao Masakage sat down on the tatami with a thud and pierced Kagetora with his ferocious gaze.

"It's a pity Kagetora. Did you become fed up with your pretend Bishamonten game, and escaped to Mt. Koya at last? It seems that it has become hard to hold your vow of celibacy throughout your life while being the head of a samurai family. If you become a priest you can escape. But I won't let you flee. No, this time I'm not going to let you free."

"This shitty idiot! You won't chase down this Kagetora anymore!" Usami tried to restrain Masakage, but Naoe Yamato stopped Usami with his eyes, "Anyways, I'll let you say what you want to say. Something might happen."

"Run away? This Kagetora? From you?"

"That's right. You ran away from me. You were frightened by my courtship and ran away. But it isn't only that. You are going to escape from everyone's lives."

"Masakage! I don't fear you! Even if you think yourself to be strong, you haven't become one of Bishamonten's rivals. I will win if I battle with you. Even if I fight you one hundred times, I will win one hundred times. You are the husband of my older sister. Therefore, know that I use my heart of mercy!"

"Hmm. Kagetora. You are certainly born as a genius of war. You will win if you fight. Usami Sadamitsu's strategy, and Naoe Yamato's underhanded manipulations, you don't need either of them. Since the creation of Japan, the only genius to be equal to you in battle would

only be Minamoto Yoshitsune. I can understand the reason that you were not stopped in posing as Bishamonten. However, you are weak. Weak at heart. When it becomes suffocating, you will immediately try to run away from reality. It's because you don't want to be hurt that you insist that you are the incarnation of Bishamonten and not a human being. Since your father was killed in the riot, you have continued trying to escape the harsh reality in front of you. On that day, you stopped living as a human being. It's frightening to be hurt. You want to die as the unrivaled undefeated god of war. You are scared of being defeated in battle. You are even afraid of living as a human. That you will awaken to the feeling of love and it won't come to fruition, that thought burns in your body. You suffer and struggle, and you can't do it. You have no such courage. If you have a vow of celibacy from the beginning though, you will never be disappointed in love."

Usami and Naoe were watching the exchange between the two of them with baited breath.

Nagao Masakage came with the intention to die. If I am to be robbed of Kagetora by Mt. Koya-san forever, I would rather say everything I want to say to Kagetora. For Nagao Masakage who could be called a lump of ambition, to the young Himekishi Kagetora – he was an existence that always yearned for her and would bet it all without a single regret.

"But before you, a nemesis called Takeda Harunobu appeared. That Takeda Harunobu, she can't quit while she is ahead. If you take up the destiny to go to war with that Himekishi, eventually one of you will be dragged to the ground. Now that you have faced Takeda Harunobu, being the incarnation of Bishamonten, your war of justice, your heart of compassion, and your confidence to persist to these pipe dreams faded away. Therefore you escaped without care for your appearance."

Her rival that she hadn't been able to settle her fight with two times in Kawanakajima, Takeda Harunobu – later Takeda Shingen.

"...Don't speak the name of Takeda Harunobu in such a way! A man who is covered in blood and greed like you! Don't dishonor me and Harunobu!"

Masakage's abuse, Kagetora had endured it stoically.

But the moment that name was mentioned, she became enraged and lost control.

"You! What do you understand about us?"

While letting her bitter tears overflow, she slammed the bamboo on Masakage's hard head and bulky chest.

While Masakage became covered in blood, he continued staring at Kagetora with a small smile-

From this day forward.

Kagetora – Uesugi Kenshin returned to Echigo with Usami Sadamitsu and Naoe Yamato.

To Nagao Masakage who returned earlier, Kagetora made a vow.

“Masakage. I will never run away. I will not escape. You don’t have the power to drag me from the world of the heavens.”

“That may be so. But I will win in the end. Even if I become a corpse and exist only as a soul, I will surely drag you to earth.” Masakage only laughed fearlessly.

And then – the fourth decisive battle was carried out in Kawanakajima. Immediately after, the Echigo Army and the Takeda army took massive damage.

The strategist Usami Sadamitsu and the treacherous fiend Nagao Masakage both drowned while boating together in a lake. Kenshin designated Masakage’s child as her adopted daughter, the many holy crusades were rewarded, and Echigo which was on the brink of breaking up due to the battles in Kawanakajima, at last completely unified under Kenshin.

Naoe Yamato was the only one of the three men who detained Kenshin in Mt. Koya who survived. After the mysterious death of the two of them, he suddenly grew old, fell sick, and quietly died. Naoe Yamato followed his lifelong oath of celibacy until the end.

He entrusted Kenshin with the Himekishi, Naoe Kanetsugu, who Usami Sadamitsu had introduced him to and who he had raised as his own adopted daughter.



After leaving the haunted house, Kenshin talked about it even after she began walking down the road on her own feet.

Usami Sadamitsu. Naoe Yamato. Nagao Masakage.

The story of the men who lived with Kenshin, sometimes quarreled, and then disappeared across Echigo.

Yoshiharu remembered.

Uesugi Kenshin is not some mutant genius that suddenly descended to earth, she was raised by a large number of people in war-torn Echigo. She was loved, built up hostility while fighting against others, and was treated as a miracle or the crystallization of a dream.

But in Echigo there were only male commanders. Kenshin's existence was too dazzling, an existence that drove many male commanders crazy with ambition.

That is why Kenshin confined herself in Bishamondo, where she wouldn't need to maintain her vow of celibacy.

Yoshiharu had thought she was an ice princess who had completely shut herself up in a fortress of ice.

"Do you understand the reason that I flew into a rage at Oda Nobuna? Sagara Yoshiharu. That woman who obtained the power of the Three Sacred Treasures, steals the world, climbs to these heights, is equal to God, won't stop living as a human being, and declared to all of Japan that she won't throw away love. It felt like she completely denied my way of life.

"It's a misunderstanding Kenshin. Nobuna has no intention on personally becoming a God. She will live as a human girl to the end. She wants to end the era that depends on god's miracles and fears the curses of vengeful spirits. She chose the future where human beings can live using the power of humans. That is the path Nobuna chose. Because the fellow is easily misunderstood, she is called a demon king that runs wild in order to destroy the gods and exterminate traditions."

"There is no credibility to that when she displayed her own image in Soken Temple."

"That is only to make fun of you who calls yourself the incarnation of Bishamonten."

"Excuse me? Even if that's the case I have no choice but to destroy Oda Nobuna!"

"Now now, calm down. But, while Nagao Masakage is a selfish man that continued to stubbornly make advances to you while making your older sister his wife, there might be some truth in Masakage's words. Kenshin, you have become stuck...you seem to live only for vows to the deceased."

For some reason Uesugi Kenshin was irritating, and Yoshiharu couldn't stand it.

To meet each other only once in Kyoto and only spend half a day in Azuchi, it wasn't a situation where he could interfere with her lifestyle, even if he understood the reason.

"You plan on ridiculing me? Do you also say that I am a child who is playing as Bishamonten? That to protect my heart from the shock of seeing the figure of my father lose in battle and die in front of me, I began to say that I am the incarnation of Bishamonten? No. I inherited my will from Usami and Naoe."

Kenshin jabbed the bamboo into Yoshiharu's shoulder while flushing.

“I think that your will that chose to live as Bishamonten to show justice in these chaotic times is precious and beautiful. I think that Usami-san and Naoe-san above all also found a beautiful dream in your pure heart. Certainly, someone must lead the people, or there will be no end to these chaotic times. You have that power. But, while it is important to inherit the will of the deceased, the future is necessary to live as a human being. The hope for the future. The present you is bound by your promises with Bishamonten and the deceased, I feel that you haven't lived your own life for a single day.

“Well. Having a life where you pretend to be the elegant Hikaru Genji that exchanges kisses with his lover, to you it might seem so. But that kind of thing...though it might be necessary for human beings, it is unnecessary for Bishamonten.”

“All day long you are taking a break from your journey?”

“No. According to the words of Bishamonten, there is little left of my life. When I consign Oda Nobuna to oblivion, my life as Bishamonten will be over. From the start I thought that I couldn't live for a long time. Because I was born with such a weak body. With a childlike figure of an ugly rabbit. So I don't want to have any regrets. Uesugi Kenshin was the genuine commander of justice who gave everything to righteousness, she was the true Bishamonten. If the people of the future will hand that story down, I won't regret having a short life. Rather than living for a long time and being left with regrets by exposing myself to disgraceful behavior and being branded as disqualified from being Bishamonten. If I carry through my life of abstinence and end my life with an unrivaled undefeated record, when I return to heaven as the true Bishamonten, Naoe Yamato and Usami Sadamitsu who raised me will surely be pleased.”

Kenshin muttered that while smiling.

“Kenshin! That's wrong!”

Yoshiharu grabbed Kenshin's shoulder and shouted.

The blood instantly went to his head.

Why had he become so enraged like this, Yoshiharu didn't know, and Kenshin really didn't know.

“Th, that hurts. What's wrong? Sagara, Yoshiharu?”

“I never met Usami Sadamitsu or Naoe Yamato, but I can only say this! Even if you die having finished becoming Bishamonten like that, Usami and Naoe won't be happy!

They will absolutely be sad! ‘Where did we take the wrong path’, they will have those regrets!”

“D, don't say such a selfish thing! Why can you say such a thing? You haven't ever met or talked with Usami!”

“Because I am a man, I understand it somehow! The men of Echigo didn’t worship a goddess called Bishamonten! They brought up the human called Uesugi Kenshin and were only trying to protect you! Neither Usami nor Naoe recommend that you stop being a human being. Why did you feel you had to become Bishamonten?”

“It’s a different way of thinking! Our lives are just a momentary glimmer. An empty dream of 19 years. The glory of one’s lifetime. A cup of wine. Human life is really short and transient, everyone dies in the end without being able to accomplish their goals. Like my father. Older brother. Usami, Naoe. Nagao Masakage. Everyone, everybody died halfway! My life is shorter than them. I want to be the guidepost for all of the people at least. After I have died, I can be believed in as the incarnation of Bishamonten, to emit the light of justice from the skies, I want to be such a person! To end the chaotic era where the hearts of the people have been hardened like beasts, someone has to do it. Because I don’t want to break off Usami’s will. I don’t want to accept the ending that his life was a farce! Therefore I cut off my bond of camaraderie, and even continued fighting against Takeda Shingen! I was fine. If I become a star of Bishamonten that shines from heaven after having died, even if I can’t live a single day as a human girl, I won’t have any regrets!”

Ah. This child is too kind to live as a Warring States general. Too pure. You burdened yourself with everyone’s expectations, so you broke off your friendship with Takeda Shingen and secluded yourself in Bishamondo in solitude, and chose to live while leading as the God of War, Yoshiharu understood.

The feelings of the male commanders of Echigo that repeatedly courted and rebelled against Kenshin, he began to understand them a little. If you are not able to drag this lonely girl to earth, you have no choice but to worship this girl completely as the goddess Bishamonten as she wishes. “When alone, she gives up.”

“Kenshin, I went too far. I’m sorry. You did your best. It’s amazing. To accomplish so much with such a small body is something that no one could imitate. But. It is already enough. You have already shown justice often enough in these chaotic times.”

“It isn’t enough yet! It’s never enough! Takeda Shingen and Oda Nobuna are not going to throw away their ambition to conquer the world! Show me the evidence that it is enough!”

“I am the evidence. Bishamonten that was revered as a God from the past, and a mere human like me who came from the future, which exists in front of your eyes?”

“Though there is no evidence that Bishamonten exists, there is also no evidence that you came from the future? I have never met such an aggravating man like you, Sagara Yoshiharu!”

“Ooh. This obstinate person!”

“If you came from the future, you would also know my future. You should be able to defeat me in battle? Can you beat me? If you can win against me, I might believe your words!”

“Kenshin? Would you say those lines to Takeda Shingen? No, it’s useless to exchanges words like this...your real face without the mask of Bishamonten, it’s too short-tempered.”

PCHAK, his cheek was hit by the bamboo.

“Shut up! Enough, don’t follow me anymore! I will escape from this Azuchi alone!”

“So go on! The long-awaited festival will become a scene of carnage! Kenshin, didn’t you promise? You would spend all of today as just a girl? If you break your promise with me, it will go against your justice!”

“Ugh!? H, h, how mean, Sagara Yoshiharu...”

“Shut up! You keep relentlessly hitting me with that bamboo like I’m a monkey. It isn’t mean at all, if you are Justice Commander then keep your promise!”

While her small shoulders shook with anger and humiliation, Kenshin nodded with teary eyes.

“...U, uu...I love animals. I don’t hit monkeys with bamboo...I’m only swatting a vulgar human... I’m angry. Angry. Sagara Yoshiharu..... I hate you!”

“Oh, that’s a better face than that of the Bishamonten standing in the heavens! Hate me as much as you like! Still, it’s dusk, there is time until the person that is supposed to pick you comes. I’ll show you around Azuchi, I’ll show you a few things that aren’t in Echigo’s Bishamondo! The future man!”

“Just a minute. Where are you going to take me? No way, you are going to find an excuse to throw me to the ground, I’ll be attacked! Men are always like that!”

“In the whole world there isn’t any man that can safely attack the god of war, Uesugi Kenshin! I want to take you straight to the future world, but it isn’t possible to open the Amano-Iwato anymore. As a substitute for the future world, Namban culture!”

The place that Yoshiharu brought Kenshin to – If was the first Christian seminary in Japan.

On the bank of the canal that flows from Lake Biwa, there was the large grounds of the seminary.

The performing group that had assembled in the large garden was centered on a pipe organ brought by the Nambans and was playing western music.

In the garden, the young uniformed samurai boys and girls from throughout Japan had gathered around the young missionary Organtino who had become the school principal, and were noisily eating rice.

“Oh, Yoshiharu-san! Wow, long time no see! Who is that teru teru bozu next to you? Oh, you are accompanied by your younger sister!”

A good person who is willing to help others, Organtino seemed to be liked by other children. His gynophobia also doesn't seem to appear if his companions are little girls, he was definitely suitable as the first headmaster of the seminary.

“Oh. Is that it? It seems the children are still increasing? It feels like the Organtino kindergarten is opening in opposition to the Sagara kindergarten!”

“Yes. Not only from the areas around Kyoto, it seems the children of the Christian families all the way in Kyushu have come to Azuchi to study abroad~. Hyuga's Ito clan, Nagasaki's Arima clan and Omura clan, even the samurai children of Bungo's Otomos.

“I see. There are many Christians in Kyushu.”

“However in Kyushu now, the Shimazus of Satsuma that hate Christians seem to be going on a rampage to drive out the Nambans. The Christian daimyos of Kyushu are all going to need to rely on Nobuna-sama who rules over the whole country. If the retainer troops of the Otomos are divided into a Christian and Buddhist group, it would be a serious situation for the missionary work in the Warring States Era Japan.”

“The Shimazu are certainly incredibly strong...are you okay?”

“The missionary Gaspard-sama who is in Kyushu, he stirred up Otomo-sama too much to make the Country of God in Hyuga of all places. Because it is a sacred ground that holds the legend that the gods descended in Hyuga, Shimazu Iehisa seems to have lost it. Gaspard-sama seems to think that he can completely wipe out the old culture of this country and make it a Christian nation...it is troubling.”

“Is that the missionary that sent the Magatama to Gamo Ujisato to send me back to the future? When doing missionary work in Japan, would I who came from the future be a hindrance? But, to be aware of the power of the Magatama is quite suspicious. He isn't an ordinary missionary.”

“Yes. He has the appearance of a beautiful gentlemen, but he is a terrible man who will use any means at his disposal. Otomo-sama has been completely taken by him...he will meet Nobuna-sama eventually. I'm worried about Nobuna-sama.”

“Because Nobuna has me it isn't a problem! Never mind that let's eat, it is a festival today!”

“Oh, yes. Alright!”

While Orgatino was giving the children meals in turn, Kenshin stared at Orgatino and tilted her head with a “?”.

“This is a Namban missionary...this is my first time seeing one. It’s strange, the color of his hair and his skin color, even the color of his eyes is similar to mine.”

“Isn’t it because white people have little pigment that they are called white people? By the way, conversely there are black people with black skin. In the future, everyone lives together normally.”

“If their skin is so white, there are many people who call themselves Bishamonten aren’t there?”

“There aren’t any people like that! In future Japan, I think there are many white people?”

Is that how it is, Kenshin stared blankly.

“Um. Who is the younger sister that is accompanying you Yoshiharu-san? The number increased a lot. That’s right. I believe the teru teru bozu is Norinosuke-chan?”

“That’s wrong. I am the Echigo’s god of war, Uesugi Kenshin. Best regards.”

“Uwa! Yes, yes! Norinosuke! This is Norinosuke! She has been saying some slightly bothersome things today, don’t worry about it!”

Yoshiharu suggested that Orgatino adopt the dining method called “barbecue” on this day.

Originally it was a seminary for the children of the Christian samurais, but on the day of the Azuchi Castle’s grand opening festival, “This is the Namban School.” “That bizarre musical instrument. Because Orgatino is playing it, it sounds like “Organ”? “It smells so good!” The garden of the building was crowded by a great crowd of sightseers and tourists who gathered in obvious curiosity.

“Tourist-sans. Today we are selling a Namban dish which we brought over from Nagasaki~. I will use the proceeds as funds for the seminary, by all means purchase some~! We are making money little by little!”

Orgatino who had become completely accustomed to the language of Sakai’s merchants recommended the Namban cooking to Yoshiharu and Kenshin with a “by all means feel free.”

“Come on Norinosuke-chan. Please have the excellent castella of Spain!”

“I find Namban cakes unpleasant...amu...oh...sweet...howaaa~...”

Oh, Kenshin who had been so moody began to happily smile and squirm in happiness with a single bite.

Castellas are incredible! Yoshiharu was impressed.

But Kenshin who was eating a castella for the first time in her life was more impressed.

“What is this...what is this...delicious...delicious!”

“It seems to have suited your tastes! At first glance it looks like it is the color of blood, but it isn’t blood. It is wine. Oh, but a child should only have a little. Because it is alcohol.

“Because I am not a child it isn’t a problem. I’ll receive...open up...oh, it is sweet...although it is liquor it is sweet...fu, fuaaaaa.....!?”

Kenshin staggered around while flushing.

Yoshiharu who hurriedly supported her back, was beaten on the head with the bamboo and a “rude fellow.”

“Fua...hic. Hic? I wonder what that was. I believed I was strong against alcohol...oh. Feet. My feet are unsteady...Sagara Yoshiharu, support me without touching me...auu.”

“Don’t say unreasonable things! Well Organtino. The sun hasn’t set yet, will you begin what I suggested? You know, the ‘dance party.’ I’m sorry, that was English.”

“I understand. Today is a festival! While playing popular music in the gardens, we sing and dance. Gregorian chants are standard in the seminary, but because Yoshiharu-san said ‘You dance during the O-bon festival in Japan’, I’ll do it.

The children and pupils yelled “Oooh!” and formed boy and girl pairs and made a ring.

While there were some boy and boy pairs and girl and girl pairs among them too, since they were children it wasn’t a problem.

However, for Uesugi Kenshin, it was a big problem.

“Sagara Yoshiharu? Wh, why are you grabbing my hand and pulling me by my waist? S, Stop. F, filthy.”

“Now, now. Put aside rank and party. This is known as the O-bon Festival dance. Have you ever danced with somebody in a festival in this way?

“That would be impossible. I am the daimyo of Echigo, leader of Kanto, the unrivaled undefeated god of war, Bishamonten.....release my hand!

“Compared to the normal O-bon dance that was generally relaxed, both the choreography and music are the future method this time. Because we will be dancing extremely quickly there isn’t any time to be embarrassed.”

“Our first piece is the latest popular song that is sweeping over Europe. It is Luca Marenzio’s ‘A Roma’, although the original song is acappella, we’ll play it lively like a Zipangu festival! Everybody, make a pair and join hands!”

Organtino stood in front of the pipe organ and began to bang on the keyboard while his hair became disheveled. “Uaaaaa! The music is an explosion! Though I am normally timid and frightened by girls, I am only different when playing music! Fiercely in the future method! Deliver my feelings to Rome!” The musical performance by the boys and girls began.

“Just a minute. Wait. What am I doing?”

“There is no time to hesitate! Spin and twirl, dance and dance!”

“D,d,d,d, don’t lift my body without permission!”

“That is the choreography! Because you are light, I can spin and turn while lifting you. Hiya!”

“Aaah! I’m getting dizzy! Stop it!”

Kenshin who ate the wine and had gotten drunk wasn’t able to resist.

A Japanese festival with Namban music, even though the future dance that Yoshiharu taught Organtino wasn’t very detailed, it was enthusiastically blended and jumbled with the Trinity and became a mysterious musical performance. They sang at random and danced at a tremendous speed.

Everyone continued dancing at 100-meter dash speeds.

“This is great! This speed, this tempo, it’s amazing Yoshiharu-san! I am sure to be excommunicated if the pope heard it, but I don’t mind!”

I have a hunch I just changed the history of music, Yoshiharu nodded carelessly.

“Uoooo! The dance music I knew wasn’t difficult, but everything is great! I’m getting fired up! Next is the great turn the Giant Slalom! Here are the results of my training in the Murakami Navy!”

“Che. Stop....Sagara.....KYAAAA!?”

“Whirl, whirl! So light, so light! If I lose my hold you will go beyond the fence and splash into the canal! Ahahahah!”

“Ukiiii! I’ll remember this!”

While being literally swung around by Yoshiharu, it seems that Kenshin became furious and embarrassed by the foolishness.

“It’s your turn next! I’ll give you unlimited spins!”

Kenshin landed while staggering, and swung Yoshiharu’s arm that had grasped her.

Yoshiharu’s body began to gently float, and then

“Oh? Whoa whoa, u uwaaaaah!?”

While his hand was still joined with Kenshin’s, Yoshiharu’s body began to spin around and around vertically in the air.

“HIEEEEE!?”

Kenshin would not let go of his hand.

He started steadily going faster and faster.

“Ahahaha! If I use my taijutsu for dancing, I can even do something like this! Sagara Yoshiharu! What a sorry state!”

“I surrender, help, kueeeee! Oeeeeee!”

“I won’t! If you want forgiveness, prostrate yourself and admit that you do not rival Bishamonten-sama! I’ll continue spinning you around and around until then!”

“What is that? Who is Bishamonten!? Like hell I will prostrate myself! Oh, but I’m already at my limit ooooooooooooo! What in the world is this ability, the so-called Aikido...?”

“Fufu. If Yoshiharu says ‘I surrender to Uesugi Kenshin-sama’ I’ll forgive you!”

“Oh, thank you Kenshin-sama...I can’t call yourself by that name in front of so many people!”

“...Ah. I forgot. It was unconscious.”

“I have been waiting for you Sagara Yoshiharu! According to this Simeon’s predictions you would come by this seminary with the purpose of Frois’ breasts, but why on earth did you bring Uesugi Kenshin dressed as Otani Norinosuke? When Oda Nobuna’s eyes are off you are you having an affair with the Himekishi of other countries again? Are you an adult? Is it an adult relationship? You really can’t help being a would-be Hikaru Genji, mufu!”

One girl with short hair that had mixed in with the child musical performers, stood up abruptly.

It was Kuroda Kanbei.

What luck! I have outwitted Hanbei, and now I can raise the beacon of the First-class KuroKan! All of you, catch Uesugi Kenshin! The greatest of deeds!”

Aaaah! The child musical performers targeted and rushed at Kenshin and Yoshiharu.

“Nene will also ambush! Ani-sama, having an affair with Uesugi Kenshin is a wrongdoing equal to treason! Be prepared!”

“Damn! Of all things, to be found by Kanbei who doesn’t know how to listen! Furthermore there is Nene! Kenshin, it will be bad if the uproar spreads! Flee!”

“Where do I run away to.....ahh...it’s no good, because you were swinging me, my legs are unsteady...”

“Even I was given centrifugal force at the same level as astronaut training and feel like vomiting! Hey, hey Kanbei, this isn’t a rebellion. Really. It’s different. That if a man and woman of age dance together it is an affair, I thought you had graduated from such childish thoughts!”

“Because Simeon is a child, I don’t understand it, ahahaha! If I can exceed Hanbei who headed to Azuchi Castle! That will be fine!”

“I beg you, please overlook it! If you push Kenshin into making a serious effort, the precious Azuchi festival will become a tragic bloodbath!”

“Sim, I thought you would say that! For whenever you blundered in, I prepared a number of traps in the seminary! Now, catch them!”

“Oh no. You aren’t just reading the books on Namban military science, you even read the Tale of Genji! You said that you don’t like it if it isn’t a Namban one, but romances are okay! Hanbei would understand the atmosphere and let us go!”

“Hanbei is too sweet here! But as for this Simeon! I am not sweet! Whatever the reason! To overlook the enemy is the height of folly!”

“Sit down there Ani-sama! I will deliver divine punishment on Ani-sama who betrayed Hime-sama again!”

“Later, Nene! Kenshin, this is a problem let’s go jump into the canal now! Whenever I am at a loss, there always seems to be water behind me! I seem to have a fated connection with water. Hmm? Come to think of it, my ‘Sunomata overnight castle’ was on the water’s edge....”

“Eh? Just a minute. I, can’t swim....”

“Echigo’s princess can’t swim? Let’s go!”

Yoshiharu picked up the unsteady Kenshin who let out an “uuu”, and crossed over the hedge that divided the garden and the canal.

“Iyaaa...Iyaaaaaaaaa!”

Although Kenshin was scared to death of the water around her, there was no room to hesitate.

“Mu! They got away!? However, Simeon is good at swimming. And Yoshiharu has brought a hammer! Before you reach Lake Biwa, you’ll be caught in the narrow flow of the canal!”

Uesugi Kenshin discovered! With this I have surpassed Hanbei! Kanbei, who was blinded by the size of her achievement and had a completely villainous expression, chose the shortest distance to reach the canal, and ran straight down the hill -

Pop.

“Waaaaa! I fell in one of the anti-Sagara Yoshiharu pitfalls I personally prepared! Augh!”

Kanbei’s small body fell into one of the pitfall traps that had been set in the hill, and suddenly disappeared from Nene’s sight.

“Ooh! Namban strategist-dono vanished! Uesugi Kenshin uses frightening magic!”

“Aaaah! It’s dark! It’s narrow! It’s damp! Uuukukuk. Help meeeeeee!”

The cries of Kanbei who seems to have gained a phobia of dungeons echoed through the seminary’s garden.

“Kuh, Kuh....uh....I haven’t almost drowned since I jumped from the Oyashirazu ridge into the Kujira Sea....

When Kenshin woke up while spitting up water, she was on the deck of a ship.

This isn't a ship that people board. It was floating on the banks of Lake Biwa, the sending ship for the O-bon festival. Brilliantly decorated with countless paper lanterns, it was the spirit ship.

"...Sagara Yoshiharu. What is this?"

"It's for the O-bon festival. It is the spirit ship that sends off the souls of the dead. That an unmanned ship was floating in Lake Biwa was convenient, we were lucky. It seems like I am protected by something like a water spirit. Sunomata, Kizugawa, Seto sea, and Lake Biwa today. You seemed really weak in water, it was a little dangerous. You can't return to land."

"I've never heard of something like a spirit ship. Furthermore, it's a ship that is so big two people can get on."

It's Nobuna's preference. Nobuna who loves the sea especially loves Owari Tsushima's Tenno Festival. The centerpiece of the Tennou Festival are the straw ships covered with countless lanterns. The shining ships are lined up in a row in the Tennou river."

"...So. While we are on the lake, it seems unlikely that pursuers will come for awhile. The sun is also beginning to fall over the horizon. By the way Sagara Yoshiharu, you didn't steal my lips to blow breath into me did you?"

"I, I didn't do it. Why?"

"I am Bishamonten. I am celibate for life. No matter what the reason is, if you kiss me I'll kill you."

What a terrible story, Yoshiharu laughed.

"Be a little afraid of a death sentence from Bishamonten!"

"Because you had a voice like a kid while fainting, you were crying water is scary, scary. You muttered that you were going to be taken by Bishamonten."

"...Uuu...no...I don't know."

Hmph, Kenshin turned away.

"Oh, I'm hungry. Whoa, there is a lot of food piled up! Let's eat!"

Yoshiharu ate the takoyaki, crucian sushi, and mackerel somen that was loaded on the spirit boat.

“Aren’t those offerings? Such blasphemy. Besides, the smell is terrible. Is there no plain food that doesn’t have an odor?”

“Because the food is just for the festival, the seasoning is over the top. Oh, isn’t this the soy milk which I brought using a future recipe? It really is soy milk Kenshin. Here, replenish yourself with this.”

“What is this? It’s the color of sake, but I’ll take it.”

While pouring the snow-white soy milk into her favorite horseback cup, Kenshin looked at Azuchi Castle again.

The job of decorating the whole mountain with paper lanterns was advancing steadily.

“What are those lanterns? They have the same appearance as the ones loaded onto this ship.”

“When the sun sets and night begins, the whole Azuchi castle will glow with the light of innumerable paper lanterns. To send back the souls of the dead who returned to earth. It’s a magnificent ceremonial bonfire using the entire mountain. It is the centerpiece of the Azuchi attraction that Nobuna thought up.”

“Is that right. In this way, aren’t you sailing with the enemy general? Don’t you want to be together with your lover Oda Nobuna?”

“Ah. The festival of Azuchi doesn’t have to be limited to today. You can bring in the next one as well. Because there is a girl who says dangerous things like she will die after the next battle before my eyes, I’m not able to leave.”

“.....Usami Sadamitsu and Nagao Masakage who couldn’t agree, they also had fun sailing on a lake, and died together.”

“Now even I, after spending my first and last day as a human being, am sailing with a man who should be an enemy. It’s strange.”

“It’s just a coincidence. I never planned on assassinating you? I also don’t have those sort of skills.”

“Haha. All day long, you were never frightened by me. You don’t treat me like Bishamonten, you don’t treat me like the ruler of Kanto, you don’t even treat me like a Himekishi. Are you just really thick, or more courageous than anyone? Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“I am defeated by you. You are daringly undertaking your fate to return to heaven with Nobuna.”

“Yes. It’s already fine. I decided to swear an oath of celibacy, and cannot bear a child, I wanted to convey my aspirations to somebody,” Kenshin said.

“I found the person who will succeed my justice. Naoe Kanetsugu. The Himekishi who Usami Sadamitsu found, and Naoe Yamato raised as his adopted child. When that child grew up through her encounters and battles with Bontenmaru of Oshuu into a full-fledged Himekishi, I thought that my mission on earth is almost over. However, when Naoe Kanetsugu came back to Echigo after finishing her war with Bontenmaru, she began to say strange things.”

“Is that right. Was the word ‘love’? She took the crest of love.”

“Why do you know that?”

“The Justice Commander, Naoe Kanetsugu who succeeded the will of Uesugi Kenshin, she stood on the battlefield using a helmet with the crest of love. In the future four hundred years from now, all of the Sengoku Era fans know about it. There are a lot of theories that it is the “love” of Ragaraja rather than love meaning affection, because the Japanese put many meanings into a single word. Play on words like that.”

“That reminds me, at first Kanetsugu had insisted that this crest is read charming not love. I laughed that it was a pun. Naoe Kanetsugu’s name is also transmitted to the future?”

“Yes. As the famous general who inherited Uesugi Kenshin’s spirit of justice.”

“Is that so. What a relief. Hey, Sagara Yoshiharu. My life was not a wasted effort right? Even in the future, is my father slandered as the ‘murderer of his master’?”

“Of course. You worked so hard. The life of the Justice Commander, Uesugi Kenshin, is passed down in the future. There isn’t a single person who condemns your father as a murderer of his master. The brightness of the huge existence called Uesugi Kenshin, and the struggle of Naoe Kanetsugu to succeed the will of Uesugi Kenshi, it blows away all of Nagao Tamakage’s misdeeds. In fact, other than the fact that he is the father of Uesugi Kenshin, even I don’t know much about Nagao Tamakage.”

“And what about me, I who stole the position of family head from my older brother, and was appointed to the office of Kanto official to succeed the Uesugi clan? Was I not blamed for treasonous behavior that was stained with greed?”

“If they are Japanese, everyone knows that you didn’t ask for rewards, didn’t run to act out of self-interest, and earnestly continued to fight for justice.”

“...Really.”

The day completely ended, and night came.

To send off the souls of the dead who came back to earth with lights, it is the night of the O-bon festival.

The innumerable lanterns decorating Azuchi Castle emitted their light.

On the surface of Lake Biwa, the shining Azuchi mountain appeared upside-down.

The ship which floated on the lake hoisted a torch, the lanterns were added to the town of Azuchi's roads all at once, and the seminary was sounding a bell.

“...Beautiful...”

Kenshin who had made up her mind and was about to drink the soy milk suddenly stopped her hand, and watched the castle and town of Azuchi which gleamed in the darkness.

“Ah. It's beautiful. It's like something from a fantasy world. To decorate a castle and town with innumerable lights like this.”

Kenshin recalled the Kasuga Castle of her hometown.

Cold Echigo. Dark night. When she was young, Kenshin was a weak child who would collapse if she went outside during the daytime. Therefore she always strolled in Kasuga Castle at night. The dim moonlight. The loneliness that freezes you.

It was scary to go out into the dazzling world.

The dark world of the night, the world with only moonlight, that is the place I should be, so I believed.

But, Azuchi Castle this evening, while it was shining brightly, the countless small lights were kind even to Kenshin's eyes.

Many humans are living.

A lot of people are enjoying the festival.

They all are living their own lives.

“I wonder if Usami and Naoe's souls also came to Azuchi this evening. Are they looking at this beautiful Azuchi castle from somewhere?”

“The souls of the dead, humans that have died, have you ever met them?”

“No. Though it is disappointing, I have never met them. The only person who appears before me is Bishamonten. Always.”

Kenshin seemed to be sad.

She seemed to want to say that neither Usami nor Naoe would appear.

“While Nobuna is letting this castle’s light and town’s light appear to mourn the dead, she are also giving new hope for the humans that are alive. That fellow sure is a greedy one.”

“I who will destroy Oda Nobuna soon, am I allowed to view this sight? Why are you so kind? To your own enemy.”

Aren’t you the one who is continually forgiving your enemies, Yoshiharu laughed.

Kenshin noticed that the beating of her heart sped up suddenly.

“Kenshin. By fighting against fate, I may be able to save a person’s life. But a human’s soul – unless they personally desire “I want to be saved”, they can’t be saved. I, I became conceited, I thought that since I could save people’s lives, I could save their souls with my power. I recently have begun to think about that. But all I am able to do is to simply encourage and support that person’s back, but beyond that is their own fight.”

“Y, yes. If it’s a human. But since Bishamonten is a god. Therefore-”

“As for humans, we can make mistakes and have flaws, but I really don’t think we are so weak. After coming to this world and meeting many of the Himekishis, I began to feel this way. Takenaka Hanbei. Nobuna. Juubei-chan. Kobayakawa-san. Katsuchiyo-chan. Also Bontenmaru. Even that Imagawa Yoshimoto. Everyone is fighting against something within their own hearts. I just charge in to protect their lives, but I can only support them from behind. I cannot save the soul. They must win that that themselves. It isn’t something given by God or another person. You have to forgive yourself. I think with that, the soul can be saved.”

“...Strange. For you who seems to aim at saving the lives of Himekishis, to say such a thing.”

“I haven’t made it my aim. It’s just in my nature. Because I love girls. If this wasn’t a world shattered by war, if there weren’t Himekishis, I would just be an ordinary erotic monkey. Actually it was like that in the future. I believe in the strength of her will to live. I’m attracted precisely because she is strong. When I’m not here that fellow becomes useless, with this hand I want to save her soul. I was looking down on her with such a conceited way of thinking, it was a curse against her.”

“You are the same as Takeda Shingen after all, you will deny my way of life? You think that my act of saving the souls of other people with my heart of mercy is just useless arrogance?”

“She won’t deny you. Even I couldn’t. But to simply continue to bear the role of constantly forgiving others, what a painful and lonely way to live is what I thought. Even you are

a human being. Moreover, a girl of marriageable age. Isn't it enough now? Didn't you become enraged when the Amano-Iwato was opened, because you actually wanted to live as a human girl like Nobuna?"

No, it was enough to decide to be Bishamonten, Kenshin answered in a low voice.

"Did I say a little too much? Forgive me, Kenshin."

"It's fine. Oda Nobuna, is she strong? Isn't she unforgivably jealous?"

"She is strong. Takeda Shingen recognized her as her strongest foe."

"Stronger than me?"

"In battle, you are much stronger. Nobuna isn't particularly good at war. So far she has been beaten many times. However, that fellow's soul never breaks. Even when I ran away to the Mori clan, that fellow didn't give in. She constructed the iron armored ships and pulverized the Mori navy."

"Yes. That a samurai family can make the Honbyo Temple that was so united in their faith surrender, I hadn't thought it was possible. But, you didn't make Oda Nobuna that strong?"

"The one who became strong was Nobuna herself. I only supported her back."

"...If there is something missing in my way of life, it could be said that Kanetsugu has it."

In the slowly swaying spirit ship.

Kenshin and Yoshiharu's gazes intersected.

"Kanetsugu says that justice is insufficient to end these chaotic times, and that love is necessary. Rather than saying that to persuade herself, it seems she wants to say this to me. I have never understood anything about love. If I fall in love with a man I will die, I will die at the moment I tell the man that I have fallen in love. Since I was told this by Bishamonten, I have continued to reject love and affection. Because of this, I rejected all of Nagao Masakage's courtship attempts and secluded myself in Bishamondo."

"Even though I'm not Naoe Kanetsugu, I want to say that love is insufficient. In that case..."

"...But I met you who came from the future, I played around and was told that my life hadn't been a spectacularly futile effort, I feel like the weight on my mind has been relieved a little."

“I think love is something that can’t be explained through words. However, perhaps you to Takeda Shingen...the feelings you had toward Katsuchiyo-chan, whether or not they are love, they are close to love. Surely Katsuchiyo-chan will have had the same thoughts for you.”

“For me? What do you mean? Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“She wanted to drag you down to earth from the lonely heavens. To open the door of Bishamondo and take you into the human world.”

“...Yes. Shingen used the same words. To me.”

“If Katsuchiyo or you were a man, I’m certain you would have fallen in love. If so, you might have changed history.”

“No. Bishamonten does not fall in love. It isn’t because the other party is a woman, it is fate.”

Kenshin said.

On that day. At the Oyashirazu Pass.

My father, the shugo of Echigo Nagao Tamakage, was attacked by the rioters of Ecchu, and was severely wounded and on the verge of death.

My father didn’t notice that I was his own daughter. He was frightened of my red eyes.

“...Bishamonten...has Bishamonten come to pass divine judgment on me!? Impossible, there really was a god? Will I fall into Hell?”

“That’s wrong, I’m not Bishamonten. Otou. It’s Torachiyo.”

My words couldn’t reach father anymore.

“Oh god....forgive me...! I beg of you, forgive me! That I killed the shugo of Echigo, that I murdered the Kanto Kanrei, I’m sure you are angry! But, it was kill or be killed! I had no choice!”

My father was a cruel man. A person who killed his own lord on the battlefield.

“I caused a civil war in Echigo, I caused rioting in Kanto, I subjugated the rioters in Ecchu, are all of those crimes! With this I invited war into Kanto! My sin of the retainer supplanting his lord, is it hard to wipe away? Over my lifetime I destroyed the order of Kanto, and sowed the seeds of war? I did all that and was not able to even unify Echigo. Was that all there was to my life?”

My father, at the last moments of his life divulged his weaknesses as a human, feared the gods, and asked the gods for salvation.

“Stop it! Don’t look at me with those eyes! The ugliness inside my heart, this weakness, this hideous thing, that makes one want to look away, your eyes see through it all!”

“...Oto...you don’t understand Torachiyo. Torachiyo isn’t such a thing.”

“Don’t look at me! I am terrible! If the gods exist, if there is a hell, do I have no choice but to be punished for eternity!? In this Echigo, was I a villain to this extent! To murder my two masters, to kill their subordinates one after another, it is an evil like me that made master’s Uesugi clan fall and plunged all of Kanto into chaos! I beg you, forgive me!”

So I wanted to heal the soul of my father who was suffering as he died, with just that, I assumed the name of ‘Bishamonten’. *“I forgive you.”*

So, I said that.

From that moment on, I had to become Bishamonten.

“I forgive the crimes that you committed. I forgive the crime of killing the Echigo Shugo. I forgive the crime of killing the Kanto Kanrei. In causing the downfall of the Uesugi’s clan main family, I forgive the crime that caused mayhem in Echigo and Kanto. I forgive you for the crime of trying to annihilate the Ecchu rioters and the crime of oppressing Honbyo Temple as a prohibited religion. I forgive the crime of destroying the whole family of Usami Sadamitsu. I forgive the crime of bringing disgrace to the whole family of Naoe Yamato.”

To compensate for the crimes that my father committed.

To take the lie I gave to my dying father, and make it true.

I met the genuine Bishamonten, and I was informed of my destiny. Father died immediately after that.

In place of my father’s soul, take my soul Bishamonten.

While shouting that, I threw my body from the Oyashirazu ridge into the Kujiara sea.

I who sank to the bottom of the sea, was pulled up to heaven, and encountered Bishamonten there.

And I was told,

“Never try to become a human.

Live only as a god, as Bishamonten.

My white skin that is burned when I touched by the sun, weak bowels that will immediately vomit if I satiate myself, and a figure that can be identified as the child of god at first sight, all of these are provided to protect me from the internal and external desires that would make me simply a human.”

Kenshin repeated the ‘words’ of Bishamonten in a low voice.

“Love will corrupt my soul. For human beings that try to leave behind offspring, there is no desire as intense as love. Because this desire is a hindrance, I recommend you take a vow of abstinence and join the priesthood. If you fall in love with a living human being, you will instantly die. The moment that you tell a person that you love them, your heart will stop.”

I must compensate for my father’s sins, the young child thought, it was the words of a curse that was created by the power of her strong mind to persuade herself.

They were the words of blessing that were said in order to rescue my father, and they became curse words which Kenshin gradually tied herself with.

All of those words that are currently lies, I want to prove them true, Kenshin’s red eyes pleaded.

In Takeda Shingen who is a woman like me, I couldn’t prove it.

Since they are the same sex, if Shingen defeats Kenshin in battle, she could prove that Kenshin is not Bishamonten and just a simply human being.

However, if it’s Sagara Yoshiharu -

As he is not a man of this era, if it’s Sagara Yoshiharu who understands Uesugi Kenshin’s will and lives without holding any prejudice, possibly...

But Sagara Yoshiharu already has a lover called Oda Nobuna.

“...Kenshin. All of those words were created by your own heart. It’s a false story.”

“Love cannot be explained in words, Sagara Yoshiharu. Even if you say a word like that a million times I will not be saved. Can love be conveyed to me with a method other than words?”

“If it can be done, your fate may be changed. But to me, Nobuna...”

With an expression like she was about to cry, Kenshin looked down.

“Well....why I can’t forgive Oda Nobuna, I think I understand. I....following Kawanakajima, Azuchi...even if I’m selfish for once, I can’t obtain it.”

“Kenshin?”

While Kenshin ground her teeth, she tipped the riding cup and downed the soy milk.

She couldn’t help being depressed, knowing that her wish wouldn’t be granted. When your heart is lost you should just drink sake and collapse.

But the liquid that Kenshin was drinking this time wasn’t sake.

It was soy milk.

Yoshiharu didn’t know. Kenshin had a body that can’t tolerate soybeans.

Kenshin also didn’t know that soy milk is made from soybeans.

She shook as a chill ran through her whole body.

An intense nausea rose up from her chest and struck Kenshin.

“...this is...”

“W, what is happening? Skin rash!”

“You can’t have given me poison....then, Bishamonten has passed....judgment...?”

Kenshin’s thin body collapsed into Yoshiharu’s arms.

“K, Kenshin!?”

“...Chest....my chest is burning? I’m going to die? Sagara Yoshiharu. Because I tried to break the commands of Bishamonten...cough, cough...”

“You said that there are few things that you can eat right? Is it possible you also can’t eat soybeans?”

“Yes...when I eat soybeans...my body...shakes...”

“I understand. This is bad! You were born with a soy allergy. When you take in soybeans, an abnormal immune response appears and makes it seem as if you had been drinking

poison. A person with that kind of constitution is rare in Japan! This isn't the punishment of Bishamonten!"

Kenshin's soybean allergy seemed to be quite severe. If it was just solids like actual soybeans or tofu she would probably just vomit a little, but since soybean milk is a liquid she took in a large amount in one go. Moreover, Kenshin didn't know that the soy milk that was introduced from the future was made using soybeans -

"Anyways, you must start vomiting out the soy milk!"

"...To vomit in front of a man. To be seen with such a shameful and ugly appearance..."

"It isn't shameful or ugly! I won't allow a person like Uesugi Kenshin to die for such a reason! Just vomit! And survive!"

Yoshiharu wisely looked after Kenshin.

While rubbing Kenshin's thin back while she vomited into the water, Yoshiharu fully realized that Kenshin wasn't Bishamonten after all, she was just a human being who lived a hard life with a weak body, and he felt an affection that couldn't be put into words towards that Kenshin.

"Everything has been vomited out. Next is breathing."

Yoshiharu laid Kenshin's body on her back as she shook her head unwillingly.

"...Kahh...hah...hah...!"

Kenshin breathed out and tried to inhale.

"...hahh...hahh...hah, hah..."

But she couldn't inhale.

"Your throat is clogged. Your swollen esophagus is blocking your airways. But I can give CPR in Goemon's style and send the air into the lungs by force."

It didn't seem like it was by chance.

This probably won't end in mere lifesaving, surely knowing that this isn't an act that he could backtrack on, Yoshiharu chose the path to save Kenshin without hesitation.

"For the time being it could be said this is my role, but if Uesugi Kenshin dies from suffocation even Oda Nobuna-sama will be mad. That it won't be possible for anyone to defeat the 'god of war' on the battlefield."

For some reason he had a feeling like he heard Goemon's signature speaking style in his ear.

Really. Just as how Bishamonten has possessed Kenshin's heart, my heart may be possessed by Goemon, Yoshiharu though.

"Goemon, I'll repeat my usual words, I'm Sagara Yoshiharu! I can't help but pick up the fallen fruit!"

Kenshin who was lying on her back, unintentionally bent her neck to try to avoid it.

The Azuchi mountain wrapped in innumerable lights jumped into her view.

Beautiful.

Now, I who vomited in front of a man and whose breath clogged up is so ugly, and the moon that climbs over Azuchi mountain and the lake into the heavens is this beautiful.

So I wanted to be a resident of the heavens, even if it is lonely.

"...Sagara Yoshiharu. Am I beautiful? Do I appear as a god? Or am I ugly like a bunny?"

"Uesugi Kenshin. You are a human."

Just now for a short moment of my life, I want to live. Just a little. With that wish, Kenshin closed her eyes.

Kenshin narrowly escaped death.

Wearing her kimono again, she nestled close to Yoshiharu and stared at the night sky where Azuchi shined.

Tonight is the O-bon festival. Have the souls of Usami and Naoe returned to the earth, will my appearance be seen, she hesitated.

"Sagara Yoshiharu. We will meet next on the battlefield. Is it possible to release me from the curse of Bishamonten? You who is the vassal and lover of Oda Nobuna."

"I will try. You have sacrificed yourself so far and saved a large number of human beings. You who has lived all this time as Bishamonten, you may be rewarded."

"Saving people. My life was only battle. I just let people die."

“When Takeda Shingen opposed Hojo Ujiyasu and the production of salt was stopped leading the people of Kai into a dilemma, you sent salt to Kai right?”

“You know everything. Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“I don’t know everything, it’s just because I came from the future.”

“Tell me the truth. Will I die soon? If the words of Bishamonten are coming from my own heart, doesn’t that mean I sense the time of my own death?”

Previously when Takenaka Hanbei was on the verge of death she asked “Is it me or Kanbei-san that survives?” Yoshiharu remembered.

It wasn’t the time to lie to the girl.

Now is not the time.

“If I avert my eyes from the future, I won’t be able to change the future anymore. The important thing is to look straight at the truth – in the history that I know, you subjugated Ecchu and Noto, and marched on Kaga. You were caught by Shibata Katsuie’s troops who marched from Echizen, and they are defeated at Tedorigawa.”

“In other words, I understand that if I fight I win. And?”

“And, with the last decisive battle with Oda close at hand, you succumbed to illness and died.”

“...So. I die right before I achieve my long cherished dream of destroying Oda Nobuna. It might be just the right type of death to become a legend.”

Kenshin was expressionless without being shaken.

“The future can be changed,” Yoshiharu said while holding Kenshin’s shoulder.

“I also told the future to Katsuchiyo-chan before. She would die in the middle of the war to invade the capital.”

“Shingen? What do you mean?”

“Katsuchiyo-chan – Takeda Shingen didn’t run away from my words. She bravely confronted her fate. She grabbed her own life in her hand. Originally, Takeda Shingen should be dead already. The future has already changed in this way to allow a simultaneous Takeda and Uesugi invasion of the capital.”

“Really. You, saved Shingen.”

“No. In regards to her, I did not save her life. I only told her the future. Katsuchiyo-chan’s own courage and resolution changed the future.”

“But my fate can’t be changed. Bishamonten still possesses my heart. I don’t know how to make it disappear. Even after I kissed you, it still will not disappear.”

“So...it wasn’t enough...?”

If it advances to the point of kissing, it might be possible to drag Kenshin down from heaven. It might have been possible to avoid the large number of people that will be killed in action in the future Battle of Tedorigawa. But that was a forbidden tactic for Yoshiharu who desires Nobuna.

But just a little more. Just one more step.

As it is, the curse of Bishamonten can’t be removed.

Kenshin’s destiny is fixed.

“I exchanged a kiss with you. But after all, it seems I can’t stop being Bishamonten unless I lose in battle. My past crime of killing Takeda Shingen’s beloved little sister Nobushige can only be repaid on the battlefield. By being defeated in war.”

Yoshiharu nodded. That’s right. To exorcise the spirit of the god of war, Bishamonten, Kenshin must fail on the battlefield. Kenshin must herself recognize the fact that she is not the unrivaled undefeated god of war Bishamonten, or Bishamonten cannot be dispelled.

“...Of course in history, I don’t participate in the battle of Tedorigawa. But I am here now. I will block the Echigo army with Katsuei. I will add the first black mark in the god of war Uesugi Kenshin’s life. I will prove that you are just a human, not Bishamonten.”

“Can you do something that even Takeda Shingen couldn’t?”

“On my own I am powerless, but I have friends to rely on. That being said, even if I want to win against the god of war, I have no idea what to do.”

“If you had just left me to suffocate to death just now, you would have been able to win. You are really stupid.”

“That’s been said so often I’ve grown accustomed to it. And not just by you.”

“I will meet you next on the battlefield. It seems it will become a fierce battle where I can’t hold back. Like Kawanakajima. I will surely kill you. I already don’t have any time left anymore. Before this life comes to an end, I shall destroy Oda Nobuna. I shall overturn your

prediction. It seems like I will earn my own future? If Takeda Shingen was able to do it, it can't be impossible for me."

"That's right. If I fight seriously, I can't lose. Let's fight each other with all of our power. That will be fine."

"You will know the true meaning of the words that I am the incarnation of Bishamonten on the battlefield. Even if you regret it, it is already too late." Kenshin stood up while murmuring.

"Though I wanted to do this all the way, the one day bonus is over. I must return. Soon, Kanetsugu will come to pick me up."

Kenshin seemed to be expecting something of Yoshiharu until the end – like she was silently screaming for "help" - Yoshiharu couldn't help feeling that.

"Good-bye, Sagara Yoshiharu."

After Kenshin switched to a boat that disappeared into the darkness, Yoshiharu sat down on the deck. "If we can overcome Uesugi Kenshin in battle, will Bishamonten be expelled from the heart of that child?" He questioned while shaking his head.

"Sagara-shi still didn't go to the point of kissing. If this goes on, you won't be able to remove it from Kenshin."

Again, Goemon's voice could be heard.

"Why is the voice of my conscience using Goemon's voice? Auditory hallucination, disappear!"

"Rude. I've been sharing this place with you as the boatman of the ship this whole time."

Before he knew it, a boatman wearing a cap was standing on the deck.

When the boatman walked forward and took off her hat, the familiar face of Goemon appeared.

"Hieeeeeeee!? It's the real deal? You've been watching the whole time?"

"Nin nin. You have become extremely skilled at handling girls. Well, you have become accustomed to being the future Pikaru Genji.

“Nin nin, theeeeen!”

Yoshiharu tried to dive into Lake Biwa. *Because I thought nobody was looking, I said lots of remarks and made all sorts of actions toward Kenshin. I'm too embarrassed!*

“I can't stand it! Let me die!”

“They are waiting for you. You must not drown yourself. It's already too unpleasant to give artificial respiration.”

“In the first place Goemon, weren't you not going to be able to wake up for a while after taking Kenshin's attack? Why are you completely fine?”

“Because Sagara-shi said “Don't kill” when I tried to attack Uesugi Kenshin, the blow was not especially dangerous.”

“I'm sorry. Even so, it's not good to peep on my embarrassing figure!”

“I am not angry. At any rate, Uesugi Kenshin's strength at the level of being inhuman. After I received her attack, I pretended to be knocked out.”

“You played dead?”

“I relaxed my whole body and lose consciousness, losing all my strength. This is one of the ultimate skills in my clan.”

“So because of that you were able to get up immediately? You are inscrutable to the end...come to think of it, Goemon you have never told me about your own past, what type of background did you have before becoming the boss of the Kawanamishuu?”

“N, Ninjas don't speak of their past. Sagara-shi.”

“I would like to hear it sometime. Well, it always seemed like you are a little at ease.”

“Unyu. I won't talk!”

Still, it seems like Kenshin was still holding back, but no doubt she will be serious on a battlefield, Goemon groaned.

“Sagara-shi. How are you going to defeat Uesugi Kenshin on the battlefield?”

“I'm thinking now! I'm already out of time.”

“Takeda Shingen is also closing in, the time to pay the bill for all the fruits you have gathered has come,” Goemon sighed.

“The bill for gathering all the fruits. That may be. But I have no regrets Goemon. However, the the reaction, or perhaps I should say price, of tampering with history is too huge.”

“Whew. It is simple. You just have to push down and have your way with all the girls who are madly in love with you.”

“That’s right. That ruthless option is just like a ninja. Then I’ll begin with Goemon.”

“S-s-s-stop it! Nya?”

“Isn’t it a simple thing?”

“It’s not an easy thing for me uuuu! When I’m touched, no, no, eeeek!”

“What the hell are you doing!?” Suddenly advancing at full speed, another ship pulled alongside the spirit ship, and a familiar voice flew out.

“N, Nobuna?”

“Because I heard that Yoshiharu was with a ‘snow white princess’ from Nene’s report, I lent Yoshiharu for only one day. Aren’t you with the snow white princess? What are the two of you doing with a ruffian? No way, you are having a tryst with a hooligan behind my back?”

Now what. Is it appropriate to lie and say I was cheating. That is disloyal. On the other hand, if I tell the truth Nobuna will have to punish me as a traitor that colluded with the enemy. Previously she would lose her temper and order me to commit seppuku or exile me to Ise, but it would be fatal if I dropped from the war front even temporarily.

Either way since I am poor at lying, I’ll immediately be seen through by Nobuna.

What should I do?

When Yoshiharu was unable to answer, Goemon helped out.

“Sagara-shi was protecting a princess that can spend only today as a human all day long.”

“That snow-white princess who you were insisting was Otani Norinosuke?”

“However, it didn’t seem possible to give the princess what she was looking for.”

“What was the thing that the princess was looking for? Goemon.”

“Fu. It is, ‘love’.”

Che. Goemon. Yoshiharu felt like dying and tried to throw himself in Lake Biwa again, but he was stopped by both Nobuna and Goemon this time.

“So. To look for such a thing, the princess came to Azuchi. I thought she said she wanted to accompany me to heaven in the next battle.”

“For that reason, it was her last request at the end of a lifetime of being undefeated and invincible.”

“...The snow princess abandoned herself, she had a personality that couldn't forgive people. She was angry at Takeda Shingen who banished her father and snatched the territory of other countries, and now more than that, she is angry at me who was able to obtain the things that she was never able to obtain. Therefore she suspended her fight with Takeda Shingen and wanted to settle everything with me.”

“Her will. Uesugi Kenshin's last campaign, it will become a desperate struggle even more than Kawanakajima.”

“The princess lived as a god and pursued holy wars, what she really wanted was to live as a human. To be loved as a human. But because the princess was born as the god of war stronger than anyone, nobody was able to defeat her and drag her down to earth. Not even that Takeda Shingen. Rather, in order to drag that princess down to earth, Takeda Shingen might have raised herself to become the strongest in the Warring States along with that princess.’

“It's no wonder that Oda Nobuna who intends to snatch the world and love for herself without depending on Gods, would make her go nuts.”

“Was the princess pleased that I lent Yoshiharu for one day? Or...”

“I don't know whether I should be pleased or troubled,” Nobuna said with a bitter smile.

“Yoshiharu. Juubei returned to Tanba. But Riku has a serious invasion of the Echigo army before her.”

“Katsuie?”

“Though I gave the order for her not to move until I joined with my 30,000 soldiers from Azuchi, Riku arbitrarily departed Echizen and entered Kaga. Before I am drawn onto the battlefield, Riku intends to have a decisive battle with Uesugi Kenshin on her own.”

“That fellow is clumsy at deployment, Nobuna.”

“Riku is the Oda clan's strongest warrior. With her experience and intuition on the battlefield, she seems to have realized that I cannot overcome Uesugi Kenshin now. The Oda army doesn't yet have the experience against the Echigo army. To diligently smoke out the

method to fight against Kenshin's original tactics, someone has to fight once against Japan's strongest, the Echigo army. Literally fighting to the death. Riku believes that I should be able to see something from the losing battle and find a chance for victory. Like the time with the naval battle of Kizugawaguchi. So Riku is having herself and her soldiers die as a sacrificial stone...."

[T/N: Referring to the game Go]

Nobuna's expression stiffened.

"...Because I'm weak in battle. I cornered Riku like that. I can hurry to go to help, but Echizen has torrential rains right now. The river is flooding all over and it doesn't show signs of abating in time."

Katsuie's resolution, even for Nobuna it was difficult to turn.

As before, destiny is going to the 'Battle of Tedorigawa'.

"I understand Nobuna. I am faster than you who must lead Azuchi's 30,000 troops. I have to go alone with just myself and join with Katsuie's troops. I will join forces with that fellow and win against the undefeated Echigo army. I will win and drag Uesugi Kenshin down from the heavens."

"Please save Riku. That girl sacrificed half of her lifespan for my sake. Riku has not fallen in love and has earnestly lived for battle, always thinking of me. She always obeyed my absurd orders without a single complaint. How many times have I been saved by Riku so far? It might be selfish now while letting them fight against Kenshin in the Hokuriku front, but I don't want to lose Riku."

"That doesn't need to be said. The Oda clan without Katsuie, it would be something like Azuchi Castle with a destroyed castle tower."

"Thank you Yoshiharu. And, Inuchiyo is acting as Riku's sergeant..."

"Oh. Because she found me in the Osaka bay, leave it to me."

But I wonder if Nobuna will be in time. We have enemies in the east and west, Nobuna won't be able to move easily, the marching speed of Kenshin who has decided the next battle as the place to die will be faster. In "history", the forces lead by Oda Nobunaga were not in time for the Battle of Tedorigawa. If they were in time, the Oda force's large army might have been able to surpass the Echigo army in a decisive battle. But we can't overcome Bishamonten just by praying for the good fortune of an ally. I can't win by just knowing the future. The march of the Echigo Army is fast. Moreover, Nobuna's army is hampered by the torrential rains. If the army doesn't make it in time, Katsuie's defeat is inevitable. How do we beat the god of war?

I wanted to treat Kenshin who has lived as Bishamonten all this time as a normal girl all day today. To imitate her by viewing her as the commander of the enemy we will fight against in

the next battle, I couldn't do it. So I did that. I wasn't able to come up with a way to win a battle against Kenshin. But then Nobuna's dream of Tenka Fubu will be shattered, and the prophecy of death Uesugi Kenshin heard from Bishamonten will be fulfilled! I have to add a loss to the unrivaled undefeated Kenshin at any cost! Isn't there any plan? Some clue?

Wait?

Maybe – there might be a way.

Only one.

However, this plan will be a strong poison for both Kenshin and Nobuna. If I make one wrong move, it will be the worst conclusion. Yoshiharu was trembling.

However, this was the only road that Yoshiharu could choose.

“Hey, Yoshiharu?”

“What’s wrong?”

“Like the time at the Battle of Tennoji, please don’t leave to a far away place ever again. Please don’t be tempted by Bishamonten and taken away to the heavens.”

“...That is my intention, but I can’t make a definite promise this time. I hit on one idea. It might be called a risky plan, but nothing ventured nothing gained. While I am in the safe zone, it is impossible to catch Bishamonten and drag her down to earth. Just like when Katsuchiyo-chan moved her headquarters to Yawatabara and exposed herself in Kawanakajima, I will also have to dive into the jaws of death.”

“Eh? What do you mean?”

“Nobuna. This plan might infuriate you, but please forgive me.”

“So, what kind of thing is this?”

“I can’t say, but you’ll understand immediately. It is the ‘Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan’.”

“H, Hah? What on earth? You are going to seriously make a harem?”

“Anyway, please believe me! I beg!”

“...I guess Yoshiharu. I, I wonder why I am fascinated by a man like you. Thanks to you, I’m always anxious.”

“Alright. I will return from the battlefield. Even if my body dies in the battlefield, my soul will return to you.”

“Your body has to return too. I am greedy. I can’t be satisfied with only your soul. I want all of Yoshiharu. It will be unpleasant unless you are alive. Alive, I want to cry and laugh and quarrel together. I don’t want to just make beautiful memories. If I was to lose Yoshiharu by death on the battlefield, it would be much better for you to be stolen by another woman. Because. If you are alive, Yoshiharu will surely return to me sometime, I will be sure to take you back. While it is unbecoming of a lord to blurt out something like this while sending out a large number of vassals and soldiers onto the battlefield, but. I, I-”

“Nobuna. I’m sorry for saying such a timid thing. Okay, I will come back alive.”

“Yoshiharu. Even if your face is wounded, or you lose your hands and feet, return alive by any means. Because even if your face is damaged now, it won’t change much. So.”

“Ah. Something like losing my memory and entering the service of the Mori clan won’t happen again. I promise.”

You aren’t that strong Sagara-shi, although Goemon teased him as if nothing happened, “For me, only Nobuna is special. Nobuna can rely on me.” Yoshiharu retorted.

“Even if you say you want to die again later I’ll stop you”, Goemon complained and disappeared from the deck.

Goemon seemed to be considering their feelings.

One by one, the lights covering Mt. Azuchi went out and the world was covered in darkness.

“The night of the O-bon festival is ending. Every time a light goes out, a soul of the deceased that came down to earth returns to heaven. Father, Viper, Danjo – they also return to the stars in the heavens.”

“I thought you didn’t believe in the souls of the dead?”

“Yes. At my father’s funeral I said ‘There is no meaning to this ritual’ and went on a violent rampage. But now I think this way. I don’t know whether or not the souls of the people who have died exist, but the O-bon festival sends the soul off – we understand that ‘important people died’, it might be necessary for the sake of accepting that. To escape the sorrow of losing a loved one, we continue to be trapped by the memories of the past. So we must show our courage, face it, and accept death. While inheriting the will of the dead, in order to advance to the unseen future. So for that reason I think of the O-bon festival as a funeral.”

“...I see. Maybe...”

“At my father’s funeral, I raged because I didn’t want to accept father’s death. Surely that snow princess will rage even more,” Nobuna smiled while staring into Yoshiharu’s eyes.

“But. Even if I don’t believe it, it would be wonderful if that was true. If the people who have died are truly watching me from the heavens. Don’t you think. Now the person who lives on the earth and watches over me, Yoshiharu. Is you. No matter how high I build the Castle Tower, I can’t catch the stars in the sky, but I can grab Yoshiharu’s body. So please don’t become a star. Live for one day longer than me.”

On this day next year, let’s look at the night view of Azuchi shining together, Nobuna smiled and gently pressed her lips to Yoshiharu’s.

Chapter 4 – Battle of Tedorigawa

Shibata Katsuie, leading the Oda clan's Hokuriku district corps, advanced from Echizen which was her original fief to Kaga, and made camp on the territory called Mizushima across the Tedor river.

When the day broke, they would march on ignoring the rain, to enter the Nanao castle of Noto's Hatakeyama house before the Echigo army. The plan was to suppress Noto and prepare for the decisive battle against the Echigo army.

A messenger had been sent from Nobuna in Azuchi over and over again saying "don't march until I arrive." Katsuie resolved herself, "Just like with the naval battle of Kizugawaguchi, Hime-sama needs to have a flash of inspiration to break the unrivaled undefeated Echigo army, so it is necessary to gain experience fighting the Echigo army. Hime-sama becomes stronger after learning from her losses. But some sacrifices are necessary to surpass the god of war called Kenshin. The Oda house's strongest general is me."

"Hime-sama, even if I return to heaven, this Katsuie will watch Hime-sama's struggle for Tenka Fubu from the night sky. With grandfather Hirate, Matsunaga Hisahide, and Saito Dousan-"

"Kaga is already the enemy's land. This camp is filled with the Echigo Army's shinobi. It's a waste to burn Hime-sama's letters....but it will be stolen instantly if I carry it and information will leak out." Behind a curtain, Katsuie burned Nobuna's letter by the candle's fire, put her hands together before the 'Golden Nobuna statue' that was purchased from Soken Temple, and changed into a thin nightshirt and slipped into her futon.

After an abnormally long rain continued from Echizen to Kaga, Katsuie and her officers and men were exhausted.

It was more difficult to cross the flooded Tedorigawa than battle.

The flooded Tedor river was worthy of its name. When Minamoto Yoshinaka pushed his forces through the Kurikara pass to invade the capital, they had a hard time crossing the swollen river. The officers and soldiers tied their hands together, and it is said they mutually supported each other so they weren't swept away by the water. So it came to be called 'Tedorigawa'. The raging river.

"...Has Hime-sama already departed Azuchi? With this long rainy spell she probably won't make it in time. Echizen's highways are undeveloped compared to Mino and Omi. To begin with, such a heavy long lasting rain doesn't fall in Mino, Owari, or the Kinai region."

However that is fine, I will draw out all of Uesugi Kenshin's war styles on the battlefield, for Hime-sama's fortune in war! Katsuie hugged the "Nobuna body pillow" that she also bought in Soken Temple and tried to close her eyes.

But then, “Eek!?” Katsuie let out a small scream.

Munyu.

From behind, someone grabbed Katsuie’s swelling chest as if grabbing a peach!

“Uyaaaaaa? Are you acting knowing that I am Shibata Katsuie? Is that Saru? A guy who would copy a monkey in this way, it can only be you!”

“Hehehe. As expected Katsuie. It is I. Sagara Yoshiharu. There was sadness after rubbing them before, but my hand remembers the feeling.” [T/N: Yoshiharu is using Ore-sama to say I. Its about as pretentious and arrogant as you can get for saying I.]

“Che? It really is Saru? Right now the headquarters is surrounded by the shinobi of the Echigo army, you shouldn’t be able to get inside the curtain where I sleep!”

“Hold on, I had Goemon guide me to conceal myself as I entered.”

So.

For some reason, Yoshiharu who was soaking wet entered Katsuie’s bedroom.

“The thirty thousand strong army that Nobuna is leading has been delayed by the long rain. But I was able to make it in time by going alone on horseback to Nagahama using the animal trails the ninjas use. While you are like an oni, Katsuie’s breasts are great! These, *grope* *grope*.”

“Hi? Ahi?”

Katsuie was filled with embarrassment rather than angry, and burst into tears.

“St, stooooop? What, what, what on earth are you planning? You know I am a man-hater? In the first place you and Hime-sama love each other? Have you gone mad?”

“Hahaha. It seems you can let out a cry like a girl after all Katsuie.”

“Well, I’m going to die soon on the battlefield, there isn’t any meaning on continuing to use a manly tone in the bedroom! Wait what kind of thing am I saying! What on earth are you thinking? You really are the worst!”

“I am sane! Now that the second Oda encirclement has been completed, in order to realize Nobuna’s great task of Tenka Fubu which is on the verge of collapse, I have to put the ‘Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan’ into motion!”

While rubbing Katsuie’s breasts that seemed to have become a size larger again since his absence, Yoshiharu’s eyes were glowing.

“Hi, Hikaru Genji? Rokujouin? Nevermind that, don’t touch my chest, Iya! Don’t push in your finger!”

“Don’t say so. Because I don’t want to hear that you died an honorable death, I came all this way to persuade you? This is the magnificent plan that flashed into my mind from Imagawa Yoshimoto-chan’s suggestion! I have now become unexpectedly popular due to opening the Amano-Iwato! It is the first and last opportunity to become the incomparable Hikaru Genji of the Sengoku Era! In the four palaces in Azuchi Castle’s inner citadel, I will gather the Warring States princess daimyos that I hit on and steal their heart and make my lovers! My legal wife is the shogun, Imagawa Yoshimoto-chan. My choice for lover is the ruler of the whole country, Nobuna. Juubei-chan who clashed with Nobuna over me. Mori’s prime minister, Kobayakawa-san. Takeda Shingen, also known as Katsuchiyo-chan. And then Uesugi Kenshin too! Because Bontenmaru is still a child I can’t seduce her immediately, but I will make a five year cultivation project to make her fall in love with me. This way, battles won’t be necessary anymore! I will unify the Chugoku District and Echigo and Kai and Shinano by the power of my love! I will seduce the remaining princess daimyos one by one! With this! The Sengoku Era is over! I will write a peaceful paradise! Read as Azuchi! The arrival of the Azuchi Mountain monkey era!”

Yoshiharu made this loud declaration with a fervent voice from behind Katsuie.

Because the story was too eccentric, Katsuie went past being angry to being amazed.

“Ba, Baka! You can be heard outside the curtain! What kind of delusional idiotic plan are you releasing!? You, Hikaru Genji? With that monkey face? You intend on betraying Hime-sama’s innocent love? Stop it!”

“I won’t stop! Right now I have a lot of energy and stamina at the same time! All for Nobuna! It is already impossible to break through the Oda clan encirclement through battle! Now, my romantic love techniques that I am proud of will become the Oda clan’s ultimate weapon!”

“So for what reason are you assaulting me when I am the chief retainer of the Oda house!?”

“Hahaha! Katsuie, it is because you will be the first to oppose it! If this monkey tramples over your Hime-sama’s heart, you will punish me! You will probably raise a ruckus and come to kill me? Therefore I made the first move! If you take my side, Nobuna will have no choice but to accept my magnificent plan!”

“Ugu! What vicious monkey wisdom! I’ll kill you right here....ah? Wait, it hurts, it hurts it hurts! If you put in so much force when you rub them....they’ll lose their shape....! Stop it!”

“Damn straight! If I ensnare the Oda house’s chief retainer who would object to this plan from the very start, I will quickly make you my lover! My ambition is completed with this! Even if you are satisfied with your way of life where you dedicate your loyalty to Nobuna and die on the battlefield as a soldier that doesn’t know love, a maiden like you should have once wanted to

be in love! In addition to granting your desire tonight Katsuie, I shall save your life! It isn't necessary to die an honorable death! Because I will also seduce Kenshin! I will woo Kenshin and make the Echigo army disarm! A battle won't happen!"

"Fua....ah, ah, ah.....no good, I'm losing my strength....I don't like it..."

"Katsuie can't resist it. As expected the way of love is my victory hahahaha, the difference in experience between you and I is overwhelming, you are a girl too even if you insist you are a Himekishi," Yoshiharu chuckled.

"...D, don't joke arouuuuund! You are ridiculing Himekishis! You want me to sacrifice the house and abandon the battle and surrender the Oda clan because I was seduced by you? There isn't such a weak-willed Himekishi! Although we were all born with a female body, we were born as samurai and are fated to wage war for our beliefs and pride! Even if I surrender, it will only be when I have been defeated gallantly!"

Katsuie flew into a rage.

"Even that Imagawa Yoshimoto who hated war faced a decisive battle in Okehazama. Don't make fun of Himekishis!"

Yoshiharu's attitude of "As long as the Himekishis fall in love, they will abandon their goals, passion and ambition" was infuriating to Katsuie

"S, S, Saru! I can't forgive you today for sure! I will arrest you and court-martial you!"

"Fugya!? D, dammit it, I failed to run away because I got stuck! My hands can't escape K, Katsuie's breasts! After all, they are the largest breasts! If Nobuna has this much of a chest..."

"Uoooo! Shut up! Die and die and dieeeeeee!"

"Katsuie, use your head and think! Even if you die an honorable death, the Oda army can't win against Kenshin. If you simply charge in without calculations or plans and are defeated thinking that Nobuna will find a chance for victory, you are a real muscle head! That would just be a useless death! As the world's most frivolous man, I cannot lose your boobs that are national treasure class! No doubt, they are larger than Yoshimoto-chan! In the first place, don't take Inuchiyo along! For Inuchiyo to die for nothing at the same time, that bad joke is rejected!"

"Shut up! I want to behead you right now, but you are also a senior vassal of the Odas for the time being as well. I will punish you with a court-martial!"

If Katsuie seriously tried to arrest and behead him, Yoshiharu can't resist.

Trussed up with a rope, "Sleep here until tomorrow morning's court-martial" he was pushed into the stables.

“You are truly the worst of the worst! Uesugi won’t send an assassin, but the Nokizaru are actively collecting intelligence on the Oda army! Because you were loudly making a ruckus, saying this and that about Hikaru Genji, all your worthless ambitions have been leaked to Uesugi Kenshin! It’s not only me! You’ll also enrage Kenshin.”

Yes this fellow was careless like that, Yoshiharu grinned fearlessly and laughed while his face swelled.

The next morning, Katsuie was increasingly at a loss at the court-martial meeting.

Several people who hadn’t even been called intruded on Katsuie’s camp.

Because it was hard to march through the heavy rain, none of them were commanders who lead an army.

Everyone used a fast horse in the same way as Yoshiharu, and forced their way through the rain with only a handful of their own troops.

“Everyone will band together and prevent Katsuie’s honorable death”. Somehow or other, Yoshiharu had invited all of the generals who were in the area.

In any case, ‘Yoshiharu’s court-martial punishment’ that should have been finished with just Katsuie and Inuchiyo, became unexpectedly serious.

“We performed an all-nighter directing the Azuchi Castle festival, but we were just in time. We still don’t know why the Soken Temple’s stone wall suddenly collapsed....Sagara-dono’s act this time was to laugh at Himekishis. Ten points.”

Niwa Nagahide, who had just finished the heavy responsibility of being Azuchi Castle’s construction magistrate, opened her mouth.

Having been too busy with supervising the Azuchi Castle debut festival, and after a forced march in the resounding rain, she hadn’t been able to sleep at all and had dark circles under her eyes.

“It’s not because I’m old. It’s absolutely different. Absolutely.”

“Since the Takeda forces are slow I came here, but what did Yoshi do? Really, to be a ladies’ man even here is impressive.”

“Thanks to you, my miko clothes got wet,” commented Kazumasu Takigawa.

“Because Oichi is busy raising our children, I unexpectedly came by myself. Gee, it has become serious. Saru is indiscriminate too. You have to settle down soon, ahahaha.”

The young nobleman of Owari who became a parent recently, Tsuda Nobusumi.

“The eternal pretty boy, Nobusumi-sama is a father?” Hearing that, many girls would be heartbroken and become nuns.

“...I’m hungry.”

Not part of the reinforcements, Katsuie’s sergeant, Maeda Inuchiyo.

“Sob, sob. Many generals forced their way through and rushed here in this way, but a battalion can’t move because of the bad roads, Oda’s Hokuriku district army of 20,000 can’t be increased.

If the heavy rain continues in Echizen and Kaga, the 30,000 reinforcements that Nobuna-sama leads probably won’t make it in time.”

“No problem. As long as you have this Simeon, the Oda clan will win! Shibata Katsuie, even if you don’t die a meaningless honorable death, Simeon and Hanbei studied the past tactics of the Echigo army exhaustively. Preparations are all ready! Mufu! I was marked with one loss in the seminary, but this time I will raise the flag of First-class KuroKan!”

The greatest strategists of the country that Oda clan boasted, Takenaka Hanbei and Kuroda Kanbei.

And the one enigmatic Himekishi who stood out conspicuously in the tense court-martial hearing.

“Ohohoho! Everyone is so bloodthirsty! I want to go sightseeing in Kanazawa, with you.”

Sitting down on the knees of the bound and unmoving Yoshiharu, the world famous puppet shogun, Imagawa Yoshimoto.

Elegant in her graceful juni-hitoe.

Incidentally, she also came with a band.

At the extreme inappropriateness, Katsuie shut her eyes.

“Yoshimoto! What did you come to do? This is a court-martial, not a party.”

“Don’t worry yourself, Katsuie-san. I have come to enjoy a honeymoon with Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“Shut up! Because you inspired him with your elegant hobbies, the stupid monkey lost control!”

“Now, now. What is it?”

“Everyone, listen to me! I hit on a good idea of how to overcome Kenshin and the one way to break the encircling net. I already obtained Hanbei and Kanbei’s agreement! Let’s persuade Katsuie together!”

Yoshiharu yelled “Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan” in front of all of the generals again.

“Don’t yell so loudly or you will be heard by the Nokizaru, Saru!”

Hanbei and Kanbei nodded to each other troubled, Yoshimoto rejoiced “My, my. You are adopting my plan?”, and Nobusumi was amazed.

“How’s that, all of you! This is the Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan! The Mori clan can at least merge with the Oda now! Uesugi kenshin will fall soon. As long as we capture the aloof and pure Bishamonten Uesugi Kenshin, even Takeda Shingen who had never had any news of close relationships with men will burn with competitiveness and pushed me down too!”

“Sob, sob. This is the prohibited strategy that turns the table on the Sengoku Era’s custom of Himekishis, but this is the only method to save the Oda house from its current predicament. The people of Japan know Yoshiharu-san’s face from the Amano-Iwato, for some reason it was seen as more handsome than the real thing, and his popularity among women skyrocketed”

Hanbei nodded while sobbing. As for Kanbei,

“If Sagara Yoshiharu doesn’t do this seducing to this Simeon, it may be fine to win no matter the method? But Simeon’s chance to play an active role will decrease.”

She accepted it reluctantly.

As for Kazumasu and Nobusumi, “Yoshii has the ambition of being ‘very popular’.” “You didn’t abandon it Saru-kun! On the contrary, now that you have become overwhelmingly popular from the Amano-Iwato it is a good opportunity!” They were taken aback.

Nagahide frowned, “Hime won’t agree. There is the opportunity for an unofficial talk when the essential Hime and Akechi-dono not here. As for the Himekishis, this is a heretical act that will trample on Hime’s heart. Zero points.”

Impossible? Hanbei and Kanbei accepted it reluctantly? They are being overcome by Yoshiharu! Katsuie raised a flustered voice.

“Saru. You, are you talking about this seriously? Because the Oda clan has no chance of winning, did you go mad? Or is that your true character? Everything you promised Hime-sama so far, was it all a ploy to curry favor with Hime-sama? Or did you already lose interest because you got Hime-sama’s heart? Are you unable to choose? There is no more discussion depending on the answer!”

In order to intimidate Yoshiharu, Katsuie shouted with her sword in hand.

The one who suddenly grabbed Katsuie's arm and stopped her, with her tiger head piece, was the adorable Maeda Inuchiyo.

"I'll lead the charge. Inuchiyo now becomes a candidate for Yoshiharu's lover at this place too. If the chief vassals of the Oda clan, the four devas, all become Yoshiharu's lovers and live peacefully, the Oda clan will be secure forever."

"Wait, don't slip something like announcing your candidacy in during the confusion, Inu!"

"...Katsuie will also be Yoshiharu's lover. Yoshiharu is right, the discord between two people will cause a rip in the Oda clan."

"Inu, don't joke like that! Because this monkey came to the Oda clan, Hime-sama was deceived by this monkey and Mitsuhide opposed Hime-sama. It was all ruined. That Shingen and Kenshin who were fellow rivals joined together to encircle the Oda clan at the same time is entirely the fault of this monkey who opened the Amano-Iwato and stole Hime-sama's lips as those fellows watched!

Hahaha. That's wrong. Nobuna took my lips. While still bound Yoshiharu chuckled to himself with a villainous face.

"Saruuuuuu! You bastard, you are a treacherous fiend for the Oda house! I overlooked it because you were carrying Hime-sama's pure love, now that I know your true character I will kill you!"

"Katsuie. Now matter how much you swear loyalty to Nobuna, you are a woman. But that isn't enough for Nobuna who lost her father at a young age. A man's love is also necessary too. In other words, me."

"You bastard! If you understand that much, all the more reason to stop the Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan!"

"This is to save Nobuna. I am the man who will succeed the dream of Toukichiro-ossan. The ambition of owning land and being popular! With the misunderstanding from the Amano-Iwato, now is the time to grab that ambition with this good opportunity! Now that we stand at the edge of destruction, I will return and grab the original intention I had the day I was swept into the Sengoku Era!"

The dramatic form of Yoshiharu-san who was reflected on the sky from the Amano-Iwato looked a hundred times cooler than the real thing. The power of the figure projected by the Amano-Iwato that calls to the heart of the people is beyond imagining, it seems to have an effect close to the 'movie' and 'television' that you say are in the future. Hanbei inferred the reason for Yoshiharu's incomprehensible popularity.

“To know something like that. Saru, it is said that humans show their true form when they are near death. Is that your real nature!? I’ll kill you here!”

“Tch. Kill, kill kill! But. If you kill me, Nobuna will fly into a rage and execute you Katsuie! The Oda clan will fall!”

“Please wait, Shibata-dono. If you and Sagara-dono mutually destroy each other, it will benefit the enemy. Zero points.”

The gentle Nagahide interjected, “In this difficult situation for the Oda clan, the tricksters will try to stir our troubles into a blaze. What a foolish thing.” Katsuie who had turned bright red with fury and nearly exploded was restrained.

“But Nagahide! He betrayed Hime-sama’s heart! There is no way this can be forgiven! For the sake of the many generals and vassal corps, we can’t set a bad example!”

“That’s right. The Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan is the lowest. Of course it is rejected. How about we expel Sagara-dono from the camp and let Hime judge him personally. This man has no right to join in with the reinforcements.”

Hooray! Nagahide who always supports the monkey has taken my side! Katsuie was convinced of her victory.

“That’s right. If Nagahide says so, I can stop calling for a beheading. It is reasonable to entrust the judgment to Hime-sama. It will be beheading anyways. It will just be several days later.”

“Yes. At best it would probably be exile to Mt. Koya. For now let’s hit him with a whip and throw you out.”

“Mhmm. But while the princess who is the greatest victim should finally dispose of the monkey, I am not satisfied just chasing him away after he rubbed my breasts from behind in my bedroom. Now, the punishment is 100 whiplashes Saru!”

“Yes. That is a perfect score.”

Katsuie took up a whip, and approached Yoshiharu while blowing out rough breaths.

“Ehm. Wait a moment, Katsuie? I’ll die!”

“Good heavens. Katsuie-san? For you who doesn’t have any love experience, you don’t understand the elegant plan of Sagara Yoshiharu.”

“Imagawa Yoshimoto, you are equally to blame! This Rokujouin and Hikaru Genji, you inspired this in the illiterate monkey? Because you can’t defeat Hime-sama in battle, you used

your seductive techniques to entice the monkey and planned on using a woman's weapon to usurp the world! I should have killed such a woman in Okehazama!"

"Oh dear. It is a false charge. I am sorry, things like whips are too unpleasant, I'll support you in your corner. Please do your best, Sagara Yoshiharu~"

Yoshimoto left her juni-hitoe with a pop, and ran away with an agile figure.

"Y, Yoshimoto-chan, don't forsake me! I, I'm not like Hikaru Genji at all. To tell you the truth, I just got spoiled from becoming famous from the opening of the Amano-Iwato, I am not popular myself." [T/N: The Ore-sama to refer to himself just fled to the hills.]

"Naturally, this slow monkey! Unless you clench your teeth, your heart will stop from the pain! The grudge of Hime-sama who had her lips robbed by you and had her heart trampled, understand it! DIEEEEEEEEE!"

"Hiiii! STOP ITTTTT!"

Nagahide and Kazumasu entangled themselves around Yoshiharu who tried to escape and sealed his movement.

As the enraged Katsuie raised the whip like a terrible Deva King, Hanbei and Kanbei hugged each other and trembled without being able to move.

"Weren't you well informed about the ways of love, Hanbei! This is terrible!"

"Sob, sob. There is a problem with it ethically, but when thinking about it using myself as a standing, this should be the best plan...I, I, legal wife, c, c, concubine, is the love that I can share with Y, yoshiharu-san not the same thing."

"Apparently you don't have a desire to monopolize anything! That is because you pose as an strategist who lacks greed like a Sennin. Most people have a desire to monopolize! In particular, Oda Nobuna is the personification of the monopolistic desire in regards to love, it's absolutely wrong!"

The first blow of the whip hit Yoshiharu's back-

BISHII!

"UGYAAAAA!"

"When you are done enduring 99 more hits, I'll revive you and expel you from Kaga!"

"Ka, Katsuie. Please forgive him with three hits. As I in the past lead the Owari beautiful girl corps, I have to defend Saru-kun."

“Detestable Nobusumi! You let the girls pamper you and serve you in the teahouses as they giggled and made noise, that is entirely different from looking down on the Himekishis as lovers and planning to make a ‘Harem’! Nobusumi, will you downgrade Oichi from your wife to a mistress now and take a lot of girls to your home as your new wives?”

“...Ah. Now that you say that, I would be a failure of a human. Saru-kun, I can’t protect you anymore. My condolences.”

“Nobusumiiii! I understand that the Himekishis would be enraged, but you are the only man in this place except for me, help meeee!”

“Because of Oichi, I can’t defend you Saru-kun. Forgive me. Although a man’s friendship is more important than anything, there is nothing more frightening in the world than for a jealous wife to be furious....”

“So it is the second hit! Die this time, Erozaruuuu! Receive my angeeeeeer!”

“UGYAAAAAH!”

“If you approach Kuki with this talk she will happily become your concubine, Nobuna-chan will fly into a rage and banish you to Mt. Koya, and you will spend the rest of your life as a pirate,” Kazumasu cackled as she also smacked a whip on Yoshiharu’s back for fun.

“Yoshii also has experience from living as a pirate in the Murakami Navy. Instead of being constrained by the bonds of the Himekishis and living in great distress, you will sing of the freedom enjoyed from the freedom on the sea.”

“I’m thankful, but don’t strike me with the whip Kazumasu-chan! When I am whipped by a child, something that mustn’t be opened will open in my heart!”

“This is also becoming fun to me. Pishi Pishi!”

“AAAAAAHHHHHHH!”

“Ha, ha. My chest is throbbing strangely. You should cry with an even better voice!”

“Please stop Kazumasu-samaaaaaaa! Oh, Goemon-sama, help! Why are you only absent at times like this????”

Thus, due to Yoshiharu’s idea that was too fantastic, “Sagara Yoshiharu’s punishment is to be whipped 100 times and punished”, and the war council completely changed to a scene of bloodshed.

Sagara Yoshiharu who was knocked about like a ragged dustcloth, barely escaped death due to the secret salve brought by Goemon who appeared out of nowhere, and was ejected alone from the camp.

While he was being expelled, “I just need a little time with Katsuie, just the two of us” he implored while groaning,

“Because this is the last time...to separate in this way is regrettable Saru. I will hear your last request.” Katsuie agreed reluctantly, the two of them exchanged words for a short time deep in the camp where the Nokizaru couldn’t approach.

Uesugi Kenshin will finish Noto far more quickly than our imagination and attack Tedorigawa. Nobuna won’t be in time, and you will be cruelly beaten Katsuie. This is the future that I know.

As Yoshiharu left, he told Katsuie.

Into Katsuie’s astonished ear, Yoshiharu told even more words.

As for Katsuie who finished listening to the words,

“You are a genuine fool. A hopeless fool.”

With moist eyes, “Good-bye”, Yoshiharu was banished.

Hanbei and Kanbei, whose lord had been driven out, and Imagawa Yoshimoto, crossed the Tedor river in pursuit of Yoshiharu who had withdrawn from the battlefield.

Nobuna won’t forgive Yoshiharu who revealed his ambition of building a harem at this last moment after becoming suddenly popular. Yoshiharu will commit hara-kiri or be beheaded, at best it will be exile to Mt. Koya, the officers who remained under Katsuie whispered.

As for the foot soldiers who were mostly made up of men, they were sympathetic to Yoshiharu. “If anyone is a man.” “He is born carrying the dream of becoming a feudal lord and gathering beautiful women in a harem.” “But most men realize their limits and abandon the dream partway.” “Sagara Yoshiharu is the great fool who didn’t abandon the dream to the end!” “But that is good!” “Women are stingy!” “They are jealous!” “Sagara Yoshiharu is the paragon of men!” They harbored dissatisfaction at the way Himekishis were their superior officers, and began to make a fuss.

All the Himekishis with Katsuie as the commander-in-chief had angry hearts, “Poor Hime-sama!” “The worst!” “I don’t want to see his face!” “He absolutely can’t be forgiven!”

Finally, forgetting the existence of the enemy called Uesugi Kenshin, a grand argument between the guys and Himekishis began everywhere in the camp.

“In the first place, Shibata-sama isn’t interested in men.” “She is in love with the Oda princess.” “In the future words, it seem to be yuri.” “So she expelled Sagara Yoshiharu who is her love rival.” The guys shouted.

“The pervert Hikaru Genji kidnapped, confined, and raped a little girl.” “Though it was love with a difference in social status, I supported it simply because Hime-sama was resolute.” “He surely got Kobayakawa Takakage pregnant with an illegitimate child, that is why he changed his attitude and proposed the Rokujouin to balance the accounts.”

And the Himekishi weren't defeated.

Inside the Oda army, internal discord between the men and women that was hard to repair had occurred.

“Don't joke, anyone that defends the monkey is exiled,” Niwa Nagahide made a fuss on Katsuie's behalf in order to manage the uproar, “Ahh, I abandoned Saru-kun” Tsuda Nobusumi fell into a slump, and “I dislike battle. I want to whip someone even more.” the fighting spirit of Takigawa Kazumasu who had shining eyes had also been weakened.

Finally some of the male warriors became indignant, “We will share our fate with Sagara Yoshiharu. What does a Himekishi know!” and lifted up Tsuda Nobusumi who retired from the battle without permission. They numbered four thousand. The number of soldiers Katsuie had at hand was reduced to sixteen thousand.

In front of the strongest god of war, they literally disintegrated.

The Oda army that lost Yoshiharu who was the emotional support of the weak soldiers split apart, dark clouds hung low.



The Echigo army departed Ecchu's Uozu castle and entered Noto.

The Nanao Castle was a stronghold included as one of the Sengoku Era's famous 'Five Great Fortresses', along with the Asai clan's Kodanjijou, Rokkaku Clan's Kannojjijoushi, Amago Clan's Gassan Todajouato, and Kenshin's Kagayama.

However, under the command of “Bishamonten will invade the capital”, the Echigo army followed with violent attack after violent attack, and made the support castles fall one after another until Nanao castle became a solitary isolated castle.

Shibata Katsuie and Sagara Yoshiharu entered a huge argument over the plan for the anti-Kenshin war, and at the very instant that Yoshiharu was driven out and a mass withdrawal event occurred among the male soldiers at the same time, the impregnable Nanao Castle was going to fall – Rather than by battle, by betrayal.

Uesugi Kenshin was different this time, and mercilessly crushed any obstacles for her war to invade the capital. There was no intention to return to Echigo with the snowy season like in a regular year. They didn't even pretend to obey their usual processes.

The Uesugi vassals in Nanao Castle were cornered for fear of Kenshin's raging advances. "We have no choice but to betray them and surrender the fort", saying this they rose to action, killed the Oda clan vassals who kept appealing for them to fight as Shibata Katsuie's reinforcements, and opened the gate from the inside.

It was a conclusion through betrayal that the commander of Justice, Kenshin hated the most.

Because the young lord died of illness during the siege, the daimyos of Noto, the Hatakeyamas, ceased to exist.

In the Tenjin Kawahara headquarters, Kenshin had an audience with the 'betrayers' who surrendered Nanao Castle.

All the betrayers were frightened that they would have to kill themselves when the warrior of justice Kenshin went into a rage.

Even if Kenshin forgives evil through 'mercy', there was something called a limit to benevolence.

A betrayal from inside the castle, it was a method that the pure Kenshin hated and Takeda Shingen was good at.

Being cornered, they took the sink-or-swim betrayal, if Kenshin became enraged and yelled "Do you intend to make me Takeda Shingen?" and executed them, it would be a reasonable act.

They prostrated themselves in front of Kenshin while shaking and stated their message.

"We betrayed the comrades that were also on the payroll of the Hatakeyama clan."

"In a despicable and cowardly betrayal that was unbecoming of samurai, we killed all of the people in the Oda faction's group."

"That such a betrayal will be praised by Kenshin-sama, we do not expect it either. Rather, we are prepared for death."

"Will you forgive our crime?"

Kenshin who was playing the biwa while sitting on a folding stool under the moonlight,

"I forgive you."

uttered those words.

“Live and make up for your disgrace. Keep on holding a memorial service for those you murdered throughout your life. Brethren betrayers, I forgive your crime of murdering your comrades. I was one day late in making the Nanao castle surrender through our powerful attacks.”

Her voice shook with sorrow and anger.

Was she blaming herself, blaming the betrayers, or grieving for the human actions.

All were struck by the heart of mercy of the Justice Warrior, Bishamonten, and hung their heads in silence.

Then, the bosses of the Hokuriku area riots that continued without dissolving even after the surrender of Honbyo Temple, prostrated themselves before Kenshin.

The Hokuriku area rioters came from the powerful local families that were rooted in the land. And in their core they integrated with the followers of Honbyo Temple, and kept fighting against Kenshin for many years.

Both Kenshin’s father and grandfather lost their lives in battles against the rioters.

The rioters feared Kenshin, “We will never be forgiven by Kenshin, and will be given a death sentence sometime soon”, and continued to fight against the Echigo army for that reason.

When most of the Honbyo Temple followers discarded their weapons and left the riots, the powerful local families of approximately ten thousand that feared Kenshin’s revenge were at a loss without the follower faction.

“Even though we call ourselves the rioters, most of us are samurai. She will not forgive it anymore.” When they laid eyes on the severity of Kenshin’s advance, they finally surrendered.

“Kenshin-sama. The Hokuriku rioters who defeated your grandfather and father, please forgive us.”

Even the Justice warrior, Uesugi Kenshin couldn’t pardon our lives. While they trembled with fear and despair thinking this, they stole “one last glance” at Kenshin who was illuminated by the moonlight.

“Rudeness!” The Echigo vassals were stopped when Kenshin nodded saying “Fine.”

White. Everything was white. White like snow, with red eyes. She was like a celestial maiden who came down from the moon to the earth. All of the men spoke their true feelings as they sensed the end of their lives.

Kenshin, while playing the biwa, spoke with a cold voice.

“I forgive you.”

Everyone except for Naoe Kanetsugu were astonished.

“I forgive the crime of killing my grandfather. I forgive the crime of killing my father. Forgive the sins of my father who oppressed your religious sects. It is fine if you do not believe I am Bishamonten. Everyone can believe in the gods they believe in.”

We will devote our lives to Kenshin-sama and fight to the death on the battlefield for the sake of justice, the chiefs cried out with hoarse voices.

“Gentlemen. I committed the same crime as Takeda Shingen. I conquered the castle due to betrayal and seized other countries. Ecchu and Noto have become my territory. The people who have surrendered to me may return to their respective houses. Those that want to advance with me, we will proceed to the capital together.”

“Our god is in Honbyo Temple, not Bishamonten.” “We who are her ancestor’s enemies will never be forgiven by Kenshin. Our clan will be exterminated.” The rioters that had said this while stubbornly resisting Kenshin for many years were absorbed into the Echigo army. The strong warriors who had fought against the Echigo army for a long time.

It was not just that the Echigo army of ten thousand doubled to twenty thousand.

The rioters of Hokuriku that continued to trouble Kenshin were dissolved, and finally made a heartfelt allegiance to Kenshin.

It meant that the incarnation of Bishamonten exceeded the divine nature of the present head of Honbyo Temple who controlled the hearts of the people of Hokuriku.

Kenshin surpassed Honbyo Temple.

She converted the samurai that did not believe in gods. The hearts of the stubborn people of Hokuriku were taken by Bishamonten who advocated justice and grants infinite mercy.

The Uesugi clan’s many vassals.

“The life I gave to the holy war without reward that Kenshin-sama has maintained through her life, the time to be rewarded in one go has come.”

They murmured this, deeply moved.

But the loneliness of Kenshin just deepened.

“Usami Sadamitsu. Naoe Yamato. At last I was able to reconcile with the rioters. With this, everyone believes I am the incarnation of Bishamonten, worships me, and calls for their souls to be saved. I became the true Bishamonten.”

The human, Uesugi Kenshin, faded away again.

Meanwhile, Naoe Kanetsugu conveyed the new information about the Oda to Kenshin.

“Kenshin-sama. Sagara Yoshiharu entered into the Oda camp to go night crawling with Shibata Katsuie. I’m told that Katsuie was enraged and whipped him and banished him.”

“Night crawling? Sagara Yoshiharu? He was at odds with Shibata Katsuie.”

“Really, it’s an unbelievable story suddenly.”

Sagara Yoshiharu yelled out before Katsuie and many of the other generals the contents of his ‘Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan’ which the Nokizaru that were hidden inside the Oda encampment could clearly hear. While faltering Naoe Kanetsugu reported it to Kenshin.

The selfish, disgusting, and delusional plan to subjugate the world without fighting, Sagara Yoshiharu who became famous because of the Amano-Iwato would personally ensnare all of the princess daimyos using ‘love’ and gather them all in Azuchi Castle.

Of course Kobayakawa Takakage, but there is also a chance concerning Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen, and I’ll make an imitation five year plan for Bontenmaru, this was what Sagara Yoshiharu was boasting.

“Katsuie was enraged and Takigawa Kazumasu was amused with hitting Yoshiharu’s back with a whip one hundred times. Yoshiharu was expelled from the camp half-dead carrying serious wounds, there is the possibility that this was an act to draw the Echigo army to Kaga, but this Kanetsugu can’t understand the relations between man and woman and can’t draw a conclusion,” Kanetsugu reported.

“....The love that that person speaks of, after all, it was that kind of thing?”

Kenshin’s white skin flushed with rage and shame.

“Did the memory of Azuchi Castle’s O-bon festival fade away too? When I got caught up in the moment and Sagara Yoshiharu took my heart, did he get conceited and think that he could snatch the heart of all of the princess daimyos? If it was such a thing, rather than letting that man take my lips, it would have been better to die of suffocation.”

I shouldn’t have believed men after all, I was deceived, Kenshin got angry.

“The male warriors who approved of Sagara Yoshiharu resigned without permission. The leaving soldiers that crossed the Tedoru river into Echizen number four thousand in all. The military power left under Shibata Katsuie is sixteen thousand. With the sudden internal division, their morale fell due to the doubt the male soldiers hold toward the serious Himekishis. Oda Nobuna personally prepared thirty thousand soldiers and is departing Azuchi, but the Hokkoku Highway is blocked by the unfortunate heavy rain, and they still need several days before joining

Shibata Katsuie. This is the best opportunity to deal a crushing blow while the Oda army deployed in Hokuriku is now divided into the Shibata Katsuie, Sagara Yoshiharu, and Oda Nobuna forces.”

“Kanetsugu. The biggest advantage that the Oda house that is full of weak soldiers has, wasn’t it the unity of the vassal corps lead by the Himekishis? All of that was then spoiled by the main Oda vassal Sagara Yoshiharu who decided to pose as Hikaru Genji?”

“Katsuie will leave the Mizushima camp out of necessity with the rest of the army that remains, and will aim to retreat to Tedorigawa. It seems they plan to escape to Echizen. But...the Oda army’s collapse was too perfect. If, if everything was an act to provoke Kenshin-sama and draw you to the Tedorigawa northern coast, it is dangerous.”

But, even if they succeed in luring us out to Tedorigawa, I don’t think there are any plans to defeat the Echigo army beyond that point. Because all of the main highways that extend from the Tedorigawa battlefield to the Oda clan’s territory have been blocked by the flood damage, Kanetsugu stated.

“On the other hand, if part of the highway that extends from this Noto to Kaga is submerged, it won’t become a problem with the marching power of the Echigo army that repeatedly campaigned in Kanto many times.”

“Kanetsugu. This is not an act. Sagara Yoshiharu has grown arrogant. He was misled into thinking that he could obtain me, and forgot about his earnest desire towards Oda Nobuna. Absolutely inexcusable.”

“Kenshin-sama? Your lips are trembling. Did something happen in Azuchi?”

“Never bring up talk about Azuchi again, Kanetsugu.”

I won’t waver anymore. Sagara Yoshiharu, it was only a mere illusion produced by the miracle called the Amano-Iwato. Oda Nobuna, you were a fool to be deceived by such a man. I will advance to Tedorigawa and scatter the Oda forces with a single blow. Kenshin shouted while hitting the ground with the bamboo.

“Ladies and gentlemen. We will hurry to Kaga without rest. We will defeat the Oda Hokuriku troops that are divided into three, defeat Shibata, defeat Sagara Yoshiharu, and defeat Oda Nobuna. I will burn down that haughty Azuchi Castle where Oda Nobuna displays herself as an object of worship!”



The record-setting rain poured down onto all of Echizen and Kaga for several days.

After the torrential rain finally stopped, inside the deep night fog, Shibata Katsuie's army that numbered sixteen thousand arrived at the northern coast of Tedorigawa, and laid out a camp without crossing the river.

Katsuie who considered crossing the Tedorigawa to retreat to Echizen suddenly began to inspire the soldiers. "I won't let the Echigo Army cross Tedorigawa!" She chose a "last stand."

After receiving the report that while Nobuna was marching to Echizen leading the main army for a decisive battle with Kenshin, the torrential rain blocked the roads and they were behind schedule, Katsuie nodded. "We mustn't let the Echigo Army which is gaining momentum clash with Hime-sama without any injuries. I will stay in the Tedorigawa northern coast and defend it to the death!"

The speed of the Echigo army which was used to forced marches across mountainous areas covered in heavy snowfall during the repeated campaigns in Kanto was too fast.

"Shibata-dono. Taking advantage of this thick fog, the Echigo army will probably appear in Tedorigawa. To destroy us who would be expected to cross the river."

Next to Katsuie, Niwa Nagahide.

"Not many days have passed since the surrender of Nanao castle. It would be battle common sense to think that this is about the time when they would approach around the mountain pass."

"No. We should assume that night marches and marching in the fog is Uesugi Kenshin's forte. An ordinary person who doesn't have good night vision can't direct a large army, but Uesugi Kenshin who has a different perception from ordinary people shows her true power in a night battle. The reverse surprise attack that cornered the Takeda troops during the fourth battle of Kawanakajima, I heard that a night march in the fog became the winning move."

"Even if it is said that Kenshin personally has good night vision, the soldiers will probably not be effective? How do they move?"

"Kenshin covers herself with a white priest garb and leads them at the front through the fog on a white horse. The white priest garb, it shines and glitters faintly in the moonlight and becomes a sign to follow."

"I don't believe it. But it's something like becoming a target yourself. Kenshin isn't afraid of an ambush?"

"She has faith that neither the arrows nor guns of an ambush can strike Bishamonten. If hit, it proves that she was not Bishamonten."

"Absurd. Kenshin may surely be intensely lucky. However if this was a dice game, it's like the tables luck always appears on her side. You can't continue winning the gamble forever."

Hime-sama took a desperate gamble at Okehazama too, but after that she never gambled on a surprise attack battle again. Hime-sama knows. Human beings are born carrying good luck and bad luck, even if you go through life as a lucky human you can't always have good luck. It is impossible to constantly win when you gamble. And if the reverse side appears even once you will be ruined, that's why it is gambling, Katsuie nodded.

"That's human logic, Shibata-dono. For Bishamonten, it isn't a gamble. Ammunition will never hit Kenshin. It is the will of god, the will of Bishamonten."

"The Honbyo Temple household was worshiped as gods in human form by the followers because of their constitution that wouldn't let them die even if they were shot by guns. After losing their power, they returned to being mere humans. Uesugi Kenshin is the same. When she returns to being an ordinary human, I can win."

"But Shibata-dono. Uesugi Kenshin is different from the Honbyo Temple household who reigned as gods due to the power of their unique bloodline. Kenshin became Bishamonten through her own force of will. Kenshin's heart that boosted its own power to the realm of the gods, it has steel willpower. She refused to cling to the protection of the gods. Just as Hime continued to devote her force of will to ending these chaotic times and living as a human being to the end, her emotional strength and strong dreams are not at all inferior to Hime. Or, maybe it exceeds Hime."

I will open a hole in that heavy steel heart, Katsuie gnashed her teeth.

Dawn began to break.

Unbelievable speed.

A silent march.

A formidable power of control.

It was exactly the same as when she made a sudden reverse surprise attack on the Yawata field that Takeda Shingen was waiting on in the battle of Kawanakajima.

But the numbers of the Echigo Army were different.

The current Echigo army that had absorbed the rioters that had been their long time rivals had doubled.

As it had doubled, morale was so high as to reach the heavens. Everyone that advanced through the fog believed in Kenshin completely as the god of war, Bishamonten.

It was different from Takeda Shingen who followed an art of war and logical battles, and Saika Magoichi who took her Tanegashima skills to their zenith and formed the strongest gunman corps.

“These guys, those aren’t the eyes of samurai! After the battle of Honbyo Temple, I thought the Oda clan overcame Honbyo Temple, but was it not Uesugi Kenshin Hime-sama that obtained the power of these fellows!?”

“The people of the Hokuriku area have a different temperament from the people in the areas around Kyoto. Even with the surrender of Honbyo Temple, and Hime showing that the era of humans has come, they continue to seek god. That they who were her greatest enemies were forgiven, they were probably convinced that she is Bishamonten.”

Katsuie stood up, “Draw up the horses!” she ordered a page.

“Is that the god of war? Is that the Echigo army? To have both the power of belief and the power of military arts, is this the strongest matchless corps? It can’t be measured by common sense.”

But it isn’t a surprise Uesugi Kenshin. I have already known that you would make a surprise attack on Tedorigawa. It’s exasperating, but that monkey predicted it -

“Nagahide, I leave the headquarters to you. I will go to the front line and confront Uesugi Kenshin directly. Single combat.”

Uesugi Kenshin would probably accept single combat, but surviving would be difficult, Nagahide hit Katsuie’s shoulder quietly.

“Shibata-dono. Return somehow for Hime’s sake.”

“Out characters and personality are truly opposite, I wonder if I was useful to Hime-sama, Nagahide? As I was not smart or resourceful, you who acted as Hime-sama’s page were enviable. Because my role was to protect Nobunsumi.”

“I longed for Shibata-dono’s integrity and ability to wield a spear on the battlefield and scatter Hime’s enemies.”

“Each of us was wielded by our bizarre Hime-sama, and there was no time to fall in love. I always, only saw Hime-sama. But I don’t have any regrets. Every day was shining. Even without a love affair, it was an invigorating way of life.”

“Shibata-dono and I, once Tenka Fubu is achieved we will have room to look back. In this battle, you must not wane.”

“Nagahide. The Himekishi that can support the Oda clan that has expanded so much is only you. But an incompetent general that can only rage on the battlefield, there are others beside me. If we have to choose between the two of us, it is better that I disappear. Please support the headquarters. Hold out as much as possible. Survive.”

“Those words are ill omens. 20 points.”

“If you get a lover, change that habit of giving points to everything. Oh, return alive and hurry to search for a husband. Ok, Manchiyo!”

“Haha. Rude, I am not so old yet as to get impatient. Three points.”

Katsuie rode the horse.

Day broke.

In the deep white fog.

The twenty thousand jet-black armored warriors of the Echigo Army lined up in silence waiting for the voice of Bishamonten. The sixteen thousand under Shibata Katsuie that burned their bridges and were preparing for an honorable defeat. They glared at each other from point-blank range.

Bishamonten, Uesugi Kenshin wore a pure white medicant priest robe and was on a white horse, she did not wear armor on her thin body. She issued a command in a low voice saying “start.”

The start of the Battle of Tedorigawa.

The Shibata Katsuie army didn’t move to cross the river, rather they were fighting with their back to the wall having cut off their path to retreat, it was unexpected for the soldiers of the Echigo army.

They had repeatedly marched at night at lightning speed and should have made a surprise attack, but they were ambushed by the Katsuie forces as if they had been anticipated.

The staff officer, Naoe Kanetsugu proposed, “Sagara Yoshiharu taught Shibata Katsuie that a battle would happen in Tedorigawa in the future?” Kenshin was calm, “I was also told. It’s not a problem.”

When she was told of Sagara Yoshiharu’s insolent uproar, Kenshin had flown into a rage, but now she had no expression. No emotions were exposed. She only earnestly took in the atmosphere of the battlefield with her whole body.

Not a single officer of the Echigo army was shaken.

Bishamonten is unrivaled and undefeated.

In other words, if she fights she wins.

Because Bishamonten announced “I will defeat Shibata Katsuie, invade the Oda territory, and fight a decisive battle with Oda Nobuna”, it wasn’t possible to doubt it.

The cavalry at the front surged from the jet black corps like a wave.

The vanguard of the Shibata army was scattered with a single blow.

In the east, the west, and the front, the soldiers of both armies clashed, and the earth shook.

In the middle of the melee.

“The Oda house first retainer, daimyo of Echizen, Hokuriku area commander, Shibata Katsuie. Give up.”

Shibata Katsuie charged through with a vermilion spear in hand.

She cut down any person blocking her way without any discussion, pushed forward, and while routing her foes, “Have a bout with me, Bishamonten!” she continued screaming.

The Oda Clan’s strongest Himekishi, this day, in this Tedorigawa battlefield, showed the strength of a demon god.

Aiming at only one person.

Uesugi Kenshin.

The one who stood in their ways was the one who set Oda Nobuna as her last enemy, abandoned her oath to not take territory, and became the strongest Warring States daimyo, Bishamonten.

This god of war, recognized Katsuie as one who became as wild as an Asura. “I accept you as an opponent deserving of single combat”.

Katsuie continued to single-mindedly thrust and continued to kill.

Finally, she entered the view of Bishamonten who calmly watched the battle situation.

“Is Shibata Katsuie the only person with tremendous honor and valor among the weak soldiers of the Oda clan? I will accept this match.”

Shaking off Naoe Kanetsugu’s restraints, Uesugi Kenshin advanced her white horse, and appeared in front of the wild Shibata Katsuie.

The common foot soldiers of both armies who continued the confused melee all moved to the left and right at the same time, clearing a space between Kenshin and Katsuie.

“Kanto Kanrei, Uesugi Kenshin. Under the command of the Ashikaga Shogun, Yoshiaki, I will defeat the insurgent Oda Nobuna.”

The figure of the heteromorphic girl who appeared from the white fog took Katsuie’s breath away.

Such a weak and thin snow-fairy like girl is Uesugi Kenshin?

This person is the god of war that cornered Takeda Shingen in Kawanakajima?

Why the male warriors of Echigo worshiped Uesugi Kenshin, sometimes fought amongst themselves to gain her favor, and would throw away their lives to wage war as a soldier of god, Katsuie finally understood.

While this fellow has been given all of the talents to live happily as a person who fell from heaven, she was going to choose nothing, turned her back on all of it, and became a god, Katsuie thought.

She was enraged.

“Uesugi Kenshin! Hime-sama is my dream. She will grab everything, both love and the world. Giving nothing up. No matter how she is beaten, even if she is defeated, even if she collapses, she won’t give up. Although she is covered in scars, she will get up. I continued longing after that Hime-sama. Uesugi Kenshin, you continued averting your eyes from both love and the world. You who has become Bishamonten now, do you have any regrets of the human world?”

“It isn’t possible to defeat me with words, Shibata Katsuie. Take your spear. I’m about to strike.”

The small of stature Kenshin grasped a short, thin cross spear in one hand.

It looked like a child’s toy compared to the vermilion spear that was Katsuie’s signature weapon.

Although her field of vision wasn’t complete due to the obstruction of the white fog, there wasn’t a problem if she came close.

Katsuie rushed her horse forward.

There was too much of a difference in the length of the spear each of them held.

The distance was different.

“Even if our abilities are equal, or even if Kenshin surpasses me, it will be difficult to reverse the difference in the ability of our weapons. That’s right. I have wielded a spear and polished my technique for this moment.”

The vermilion spear which Katsuie sent out much faster than Kenshin’s cross speart hrust forward, it should have gone through Kenshin’s chest.

But, until Katsuie sent out her spear, there was no response.

A paper thin distance, with a margin of just a hair at the last moment, Kenshin calmly twisted her body on the white horse a tiny bit and avoided Katsuie’s spear.

At the same time, she lightly tapped Katsuie’s stomach with the handle of her cross spear, and even the horse that Katsuie was riding on was made to retreat.

“...Uoh!? I....impossible?”

It was expected that even if she hit, it shouldn’t have been a blow with this much power, Katsuie’s body received a terrible shock and was blown away.

If she had not been wearing armor, Katsuie’s ribs probably would have broken and she would have fainted.

“With child’s play of this level, you won’t hit me. There is only one person who has been up to the task of single combat and damaged me. That is Takeda Shingen.”

Katsuie yelled “Not yet!” Without catching her breath, twice, three times, her spear was unleashed.

It didn’t hit at all.

It didn’t look like she was avoiding it, Kenshin’s body was just not in the former location where the spear was sent out.

Avoiding it by a hair’s breadth.

It wasn’t something she understood. She didn’t know if it was a skill of any school.

It was completely different from the Kashima Shinto-ryu style Akechi Mitsuhide’s swordsmanship used.

Kenshin was too casual.

Perhaps it wasn’t from any school.

It wasn’t the martial arts of the samurai.

But it was different from the ninja arts.

Uesugi Kenshin's bravery was from a totally different dimension.

In an instant, her spear was returned three times.

The helmet and armor Katsuie wore were gradually cracking.

The second shot was taken by the helmet, the third was taken by the back of the armor.

Even if the spear was thrust towards the front of Kenshin's body, it certainly would not hit.

Katsuie used the battlefield methods that she had personally mastered.

"Bottle slash!"

It was a bold move to throw the bottle that had been loaded onto the horse's back into the sky and smash it with a spear.

Using this technique, Katsuie would launch the fragments to the location she aimed at. This is the secret technique only Katsuie mastered. The pieces of the bottle flew off in large numbers to attack Kenshin's whole body.

It cannot be avoided.

That was how it was supposed to be.

But in that moment when even a blink wasn't allowed, Kenshin made a terribly bold decision.

Just before Katsuie's spear hit the bottle, she silently brought her own horse alongside Katsuie's horse and suddenly glued herself to Katsuie.

If she broke the bottle in this state and hit Kenshin, Katsuie's body would be pierced with countless holes.

"You thought the bottle can't be broken if you entered my range? I've got you!"

While shouting "I won," she pushed out her spear at the bottle that was whirling in the sky to shoot Kenshin's body as well as her own with the innumerable fragments-

"Naive. The Nokizaru studied all the particulars of that technique. I already knew of it."

The spear was also whirling in the sky.

One step ahead, the targeted bottle was pierced by the cross spear that Kenshin threw away.

Katsuie had a premonition of her imminent death.

She pulled back the horse's neck and barely gained some distance from Kenshin.

If she hesitated even a little saying, "I failed?" or "It was broken!", Katsuie's head would have been removed by the cross spear which came back from the sky.

"Shibata Katsuie. If this is the level of your serious tricks, I will end this with the next blow."

Kenshin wasn't even sweating.

While remaining expressionless like ice, she assumed a calm posture on her white horse.

With merely an instant of offense and defense, Katsuie's breath had sped up.

Her horse was also about to collapse.

Takeda Shingen really is a monster. How did she hit this fellow with even a single blow?

Kenshin doesn't give time to hesitate.

My body, armor, and horse are approaching their limit with just this amount of contact. Uesugi Kenshin. Although you are such a slender girl, this strength doesn't seem to be human. This is the reason you are worshiped as Bishamonten.

Kenshin advanced her swaying horse forward.

Katsuie decided.

When Saru was driven off, he confided some "secrets". One of those – I'll use it!

"Not yet! Uesugi Kenshin, etch the name of Shibata Katsuie on your mind forever! Another blow!"

Only one more bottle was on the horse.

Katsuie threw the last bottle high into the sky.

Because Kenshin is short, I can hit the bottle with the spear first, the vermilion spear will reach the bottle, I will break the bottle at a higher point than usual.

Kenshin was made to believe that.

“If I stick to you, do you intend to stab me with a knife this time? Such tricks won’t work.”

While remaining expressionless, Kenshin put her horse against Katsuie’s again. She threw herself against Katsuie’s shoulder, and stuck close to her again.

But Katsuie already understood that she couldn’t stab Kenshin’s body with a knife even if there was zero distance between them.

A plan had already been prepared.

I was warned by Saru. When I touch Uesugi Kenshin as I try to attack, the strength is simply returned. I don’t understand the theory, but it is the power of Uesugi Kenshin’s taijutsu. Therefore all of my martial arts that use brute force won’t work. Never challenge her in single combat. Then I will do the reverse. Softly, with a heart as if I was touching an infant –

Without having a murderous impulse, she quietly put one hand on Kenshin’s thin waist, and embraced her.

“...!?”

This wasn’t expected to happen.

There was neither hostility nor the urge to kill. There wasn’t any offensive abilities either.

Merely embracing her tenderly.

Kenshin raised her head and opened her red eyes wide as she stared at Katsuie who was taller than her.

What a cute way to be surprised, Katsuie wanted to smile.

“I caught you. You bad snow princess.”

“You, embracing me, what do you plan on doing?”

Even her tone was that of an innocent girl.

Ah.

This child, like me, if she was not born as a samurai family in the Sengoku Era, surely by now -

It’s true. My destiny and aspirations as a Himekishi, there is a time where I feel like abandoning it all, Saru. I don’t want to murder this child.

Compassion and hesitation.

It wasn't possible for Katsuie to bring an end to this silently.

She told herself what she was going to do from now on.

"Your hipbone, I'll break it."

"Impossible. I will just return a prepared attack. Even more if it is unarmed, I will return your power to you."

"I found the only way to break through. Without hostility, malice, or the urge to kill, if I embrace you like I was hugging a baby, you can't return it.

In this way, I can actually catch you. It is something even Takeda Shingen was not able to do. This is my great deed."

"Then I will stab you to death with a dagger. If you are sticking so close to my body, you can't survive."

Katsuie laughed.

"Good. We'll die together. The last partner who gets to hug this princess is a Himekishi like me, I'm sorry."

"The one who brandishes a knife with the urge to kill is faster than the speed of hugging without malice. Your heart will stop before my hipbone is broken."

"Give it a try."

Katsuie and Kenshin put power in their arms as they attempted to take each other's lives, at that moment -

"I won't let you die Katsuie! Attack, attack, attack!"

Having mastered Koka ninjutsu, the fifteen tanegashima corps who had completely cut off the signs of their urge to kill and were hidden in the depths of the white fog simultaneously aimed and shot at Kenshin who was held by Katsuie on horseback -

"Who are they? Since when were they hiding?" Katsuie glared and shouted.

"Hey, bakaaaaa! Let me settle it! Don't get in my way!"

"I don't care. Kakkiyo must survive and help with the Takeda front! Otherwise Hime will be troubled! Don't die in battle without permission! All of you, shoot!"

But.

“...Misfire? All of the bullets misfired?”

Takigawa Kazumasu screamed.

The Tanegashima unit wasn't able to fire a single bullet.

“No good. Moving stealthily like this is too much!”

“Both the gunpowder and bullets got damp.”

She arbitrarily decided without permission from Katsuie to hide and snipe Kenshin, Takigawa Kazumasu's all or nothing gamble was destroyed.

“The heavy rain that continued for several days and this heavy fog. The fog moistened the Tanegashima. Guns are vulnerable to fog.”

From Kenshin's small body, blood thirst and rage poured out.

“You Owari people of the area around Kyoto know neither snow, nor fog, nor wind, I am not afraid of nature. The sky and ground that stand in the way of humans are not my enemy. I know nothing but fighting against the earth and the sky. Thus, I do not need the earth and sky as my friend.”

“U, Uesugi Kenshin. What on earth are you?”

At the same time as she failed, Kazumasu was able to get her shuriken and quickly stab it into the rear of the horse Katsuie was riding.

“Wait Kazumasu, don't bother us twice....uwaaaa!”

Katsuie's body was shaken from the horse suddenly.

A confused melee started again.

“Kazumasu? Where is Kazumasu? Aren't you here? Damn, to the left and right is filled with footmen.”

As Katsuie rose, she swung a sword at the Echigo Army footmen that rushed in.

“Tsu. My helmet is broken. My head is dizzy...shit!”

Blood was spilling from Katsuie's forehead.

If she hadn't been thrown off the horse, her chest would have been pierced by the short sword of Kenshin who was enraged that their single combat was interrupted.

Because her body was thrown off and she spun through the air, the aim of the short sword was turned aside at the last moment, and it seemed to have hit the helmet.

I seemed to have been helped by Kazumasu twice. But now I am without a horse. She is just running about the battlefield as she pleases! I will shout at you with all my strength later. If I live, and we can meet again...

Not only my horse, I also lost my spear.

Because of the blood loss from her head I'm dizzy.

“WHERE IS SHIBATA KATSUIE! You who want to kill me, yet had no malicious intentions while touching my body, THIS IS AN INSULT!”

The appearance of Uesugi Kenshin who was searching for Shibata Katsue who had suddenly disappeared from her horse could be seen in the distance.

I seem to have been launched a considerable distance.

She has finally become enraged. Kenshin's eyes are only chasing me now.

The Echigo army footmen knew that the single combat of Katsue and Kenshin was abruptly interrupted by the Takigawa Kazumasu gun corps, and rushed at Katsue.

Kenshin is my opponent and we must kill each other, I can't die here, Katsue was fired up again.

“Not yet. As long as I live, I won't stop! If I am like this, I'll be laughed at by Saru. I will stick to my resolution as a Himekishi!”

Katsue drew her sword while breathing heavily.

“I've caught sight of Shibata Katsue-dono!”

“Surrender yourself to Kenshin-sama!”

“If you don't surrender, Hime-sama will take your neck!”

This is the opposite of my position during the Battle of Okehazama, this must be karma, Katsue gave a sarcastic laugh.

Even while being pinned down I don't want to die. I made a fool of Imagawa Yoshimoto who cried that she didn't want to die and continued resisting me at that time, but perhaps that guy's tenacity is wonderful, she thought.

"I won't run or hide! I am the chief retainer of the Oda clan, Shibata Katsuie! Come!"

I can still move.

Katsuie had faith.

There was a chance for victory.

Uesugi Kenshin who has shown an abnormal perception on the battlefield, she didn't notice the existence of Kazumasu's arquebus corps until the very last moment.

Why?

Because she got absorbed and was concentrating on nothing but her one on one fight with Katsuie.

Only at the moment that she is concentrating on single combat, Kenshin seems to forget that she is a general that leads a large army. Because her concentration is too strong. The concentration beyond the limits of humans that Kenshin is proud of, on the battlefield it becomes the transcendent divine possession, but it also has a flaw!

There, Katsuie found her last hope.

Until my heart stops, I will never give up.

To introduce myself, I must continue cutting down enemies. I will become Asura and defeat many of the Echigo army alone, Uesugi Kenshin's eyes, her sense of smell will be attracted to me again.

I have determined my role.

"Uo...OOOOOOOO!"

She cut down the jet black Echigo army soldiers who rushed in from every direction, she stabbed through the armor and smashed helmets.

Now, there was no room to hesitate about the transience of life and the people that died by her hand, and there was no hesitation over her contradictory fate that had her fight as a military commander while being a princess.

"This is a crucial moment. Shibata Katsuie. The sort of person I am, it will be determined in this moment!"

In the past, there was hopeless retreat from the camp called the Retreat of Kanegasaki.

Sagara Yoshiharu offered himself before anyone else, and generously abandoned his life to let Nobuna return alive.

At that time, Katsuie was impressed by the readiness and love to Nobuna that Sagara Yoshiharu showed, and at the same time she was ashamed that she was one step slower than Yoshiharu.

Were the feelings of Sagara Yoshiharu who fell in love with Hime-sama stronger than my loyalty to Hime-sama?

That's can't be true!

Between the loyalty given to a lord and the love between man and woman, there aren't any winner or loser.

Both are feelings yearning for another person. The essence isn't different.

It is said that the absolute loyalty that the Echigo army soldiers devote to the general called Uesugi Kenshin is resolute.

Even if you wielded a sword and became a fighting demon to kill and kill, the Echigo army would not give up. They won't stop. They aimed at Katsuie's neck and rushed in recklessly.

Don't give in. It isn't finished yet. Truthfully, I didn't want to invite that hopeless stupid "guy" to the desperate battle with Kenshin. I didn't want that guy to regret that his difficult plan failed. So I challenged Kenshin to single combat. Even if I couldn't win, I wanted to buy time. But – that fellow will surely be in time. Even if I'm barely alive, I will stay on the battlefield! I will root Uesugi Kenshin to this battlefield! Kenshin's mind, I will keep all of her perception and concentration on me!

Katsuie looked up at the sky that had cleared up and become a deep-blue unnoticed.

But the same trick won't work on Kenshin anymore, it has become impossible to win. Well, when I saw her real face of an innocent girl, I hesitated to silently break her hip bone. I am the reason for our defeat. My hesitation has put the entire army in a predicament. After all, it seems that I am a girl at the same time that I am a commander. I will die soon. In the end, without knowing love. But I am Shibata Katsuie, the Oda clan's chief retainer. I have no regrets. I won't run away until my life runs out.

Kenshin. Come quickly.

"I will not retreat even one step from this place! Even if I die, I will continue standing on the battlefield!"

DON!

As Katsuie nearly reached her limit and her right leg started to give way, she skewered the earth with the damaged blade that could no longer cut or stab.

“Ugh....it hurts! Even if I wanted to escape, I can’t run anymore. Ha, haha.....what an idiot I am...”

Her last weapon – the short sword was unsheathed.

“Everyone scatter! I will kill Shibata Katsuie myself!” she met Uesugi Kenshin who approached on horseback.

“Kenshin! If I am a maiden, even you are probably a maiden. I will drag you down to earth!”

Kenshin brandished her cross spear from horseback, “You don’t need to suffer anymore. I’ll kill you with a single blow.” She muttered with moist red eyes.

“Splendid, Shibata Katsuie. I apologize for the impoliteness of our Echigo Army soldiers who interrupted our one-on-one battle.”

“Ha, ha. Likewise our child miko disturbed us midway, it was bad. Well, she is a good fellow who misses the point, but don’t hold it against her. Please don’t get angry at Kazumasu.”

“If that person hadn’t interrupted, I would have ceased breathing while being embraced by you. I’m not used to being hugged gently by somebody. But that is also the will of heaven. Bishamonten won’t allow me such a happy death.”

“....That’s good. Even if you hadn’t made a vow of celibacy, if I was your partner, you would have regretted it. Snow Princess-sama.”

“Shibata Katsuie. You are the strongest hero of the Oda clan, a truly loyal retainer that supports Oda Nobuna, a true warrior. You should have been able to beat me. But your kindness, your little feeling of pity, it decided this outcome. You will return to heaven a step ahead of me. Both the Demon King of the Sixth Heaven and Bishamonten will die soon.”

As Katsuie’s consciousness was fading away, she heard those words, and opened her eyes with a glare.

“...Wait! It will be different! Stop behaving as Bishamonten at the last moment! Speak with your own words, Uesugi Kenshin! That Hime-sama, I won’t let her die for such a reason that I don’t understand! Even I will say it! Such a divine message from Bishamonten, I will never accept it!”

The cross spear Kenshin thrust from horseback, was barely stopped by Katsuie's short sword. It was forcibly stopped.

"...Absurd? My lunge was parried? Shibata, Katsuie...!"

"In Kanegasaki, when the Amano-Iwato was opened, that monkey fought to the last to protect Hime-sama. Even in the face of endless difficulties, that fellow continued defying fate no matter what. I will use the life I was given, and I will decide how I will finish living, not the gods nor Bishamonten! Even you can, Uesugi Kenshin!"

"Sagara Yoshiharu betrayed Oda Nobuna! Didn't you punish Sagara Yoshiharu and banish him!?"

"...Ah. Did such a thing happen. I give up. My consciousness is fading a little..."

The blood loss from the wounds all over her body was sapping Katsuie's strength.

While half unconscious, Katsuie's body swayed.

Katsuie regained consciousness and closed her eyes.

With this remaining last sword, we will stab each other.

At least one cut.

The cross spear drew near again.

But the cross spear was stopped by three people.

"...Katsuie, it is still too early to die. You can't die until after teaching me how to make my chest bigger."

"I agree! I was late in bringing the military force of the headquarters to the front line."

"I abandoned the headquarters and advanced the entire army. Shibata-dono, it's because you made Uesugi Kenshin come here. The 'last bet' can now be completed. Just a bit more effort. Fifty points."

Wielding a very long red spear with a small body, Maeda Inuchiyo.

Abandoning her gun and taking out a ninja sword, Takigawa Kazumasu.

Niwa Nagahide who should have guarded the headquarters in the back was holding a halberd.

With three people, they barely prevented Kenshin's blow.

Katsuie's eyelids that were smeared with blood opened.

"N, Nagahide? Inuchiyo? Even if you go to the front line, how do you plan on beating Kenshin! Kazumasu, you...my god!"

"No, no, it is my fault that the tanegashima got wet. I'm guilty. I was inexperienced with the climate of Hokuriku. I will make amends with this."

"Don't be a foool!"

In this battle, twofold and threefold plans were piled up and came together to destroy the unrivaled, undefeated Uesugi Kenshin.

The whole picture of these "plans", Katsuie was only informed at the last minute.

In order for this "plan" to succeed, Katsuie had to lure the Echigo army to the Tedorigawa northern coast, hold their ground as long as possible, and earn a little time on the battlefield until the "last plan" succeeded.

"Kakki. Don't throw away your life so easily. Kakki is too earnest. It is appropriate for humans to want more. At least die after the one you love."

"Sh, shut up! Don't speak about life as a little girl! And stop using that unfitting 'Kakki' nickname! Since when did that start. Since when did you attach that nickname. Call me Katsuie."

"I'm not a little girl. I look this way due to special circumstances in the past, I am a respectable adult."

"Ba, baka! Oh, no. Don't abandon the headquarters! If even you lose, it is the end! The trump card of "that guy" hasn't arrived yet?"

"...If you die, die after teaching the training method to gain huge breasts to Inuchiyo."

"There is no method. Because that guy will grieve if he can't gather all of the fruits it is zero points."

"That's right. If the Oda clan loses its greatest breasts, Yoshii will become a priest in grief. That guy's heart faces Nobuna-chan, but that guy's fingers will always aim at Kakki's breasts."

"Stop it at a time like this! Especially that joke in particular Kazumasu! I felt a chill! I was about to faint, but I remembered the night crawling of that monkey and have woken up!"

Katsuie pulled out the sword that had gone through her leg, and jumped on the horse that Kazumasu had come on.

The four Himekishis worked together and surrounded Kenshin.

“Three of the Oda Clan’s Four Devas and the red spear hero Maeda Inuchiyo. The four who have gathered are the pride of the Oda clan and equal to a thousand warriors. Kenshin-dono, you will be confined by us for a short period. Until the time comes. Eighty points.”

“Don’t disturb us! While offering single combat, you will bring out tanegashima, and next rely on four people. Foolish. Cowardly on every level!” Kenshin closed her eyes as her lips trembled.

She was not preparing for death.

The white fog was clearing, and the dazzling sun was rising in the blue sky.

Kenshin’s vision that was vulnerable to sunlight became weak.

So without depending on her eyes, she was going to see all the actions of the four Himekishis using the flow of the air and the reverberations of sound.

“This fellow, shutting her eyes....it is unpleasant. She has become even faster!”

“We’ll all continue attacking her without giving her the chance to breathe, Katsui-dono.”

“Do it. I anticipated this plan and prepared my blinding powder.”

“...What dreadful fighting spirit. If we relax our guard for even a moment the four of us will be defeated in an instant.”

Why Uesugi Kenshin is worshiped as the incarnation of Bishamonten, the four Himekishis were given a reminder.

Their opponent was alone, and there were four of them. They discarded their fears, and Kenshin who united with the god of war, Bishamonten did the same.

Rather, the splendid cooperation of the Himekishis who gathered under Oda Nobuna and entrusted their lives to each other, it increased the power of Bishamonten that slept in the depths of Kenshin’s heart.

“—Fate dwells in heaven.”

Kenshin dodged the attacks that were sent out from every direction, dodged them on horseback, drove her horse forward and thrust with her spear.

“They didn’t hit? Though four people attacked at the same time, she wasn’t even grazed!”

“...The spearhead was slashed.”

“My ninja sword broke? I didn’t see when it was struck.”

“She is getting faster! Its as if there is no end to her speed!”

Don

Inuchiyo’s small body fell from her horse first.

While letting the cross spear flicker with one hand and warding off attacks from every direction, she thrust her other hand into Inuchiyo’s stomach and dropped her. In theory it was understandable, but Kenshin’s movement couldn’t be followed with the naked eye.

“Armor is in your chest.”

When Kazumasu realized that she was next to be blown away, she smoothly fell off the horse’s back and clung to its stomach.

But the horse was blown away with one hit from Kenshin, and was knocked to the ground.

“Deeds rest at your feet.”

“The present Kenshin isn’t a human. Even with four people we can’t buy time!” when Katsuie was going to yell, Nagahide had already been thrown off her horse as well.

Takeda Shingen fought this god of war in single combat and survived. That Takeda Shingen that inflicted a wound on Bishamonten, how much training did you put upon yourself? Or did something other than skill protect Shingen’s life?

“When Takeda Shingen faced off against her in Kawanakajima – Uesugi Kenshin’s heart still remained inside her. Like when Kenshin fought against me one-on-one. There was mercy and there was anger. But right now, Uesugi Kenshin isn’t a Himekishi. Bishamonten itself is beginning to wake up. All of the unrelenting powers of the dormant Bishamonten are being released!”

Kenshin pointed the tip of the cross spear at Katsuie.

Kenshin no longer needed to avoid the combination attack anymore.

The next blow wasn’t a knockout blow.

The cross spear brought death, flying from an unseen trajectory.

“Engage in combat fully determined to die and you will be alive; wish to survive and you surely will meet death. But you will die.”

From Kenshin’s red eyes that opened wide again, every emotion disappeared.

Erasing feelings, erasing thoughts, erasing hope, when all of the existence of the girl called “Uesugi Kenshin” is erased from her heart, she becomes the unrivaled, undefeated god of war, Bishamonten itself.

There was no longer conflict, hesitation or indecision anymore.

Nobody can open the door to Bishamondo.

No one can reach her.

Even that Takeda Shingen that wanted it so much, even if she made every sacrifice, she could not reach her.

Sagara Yoshiharu betrayed Oda Nobuna, and betrayed Kenshin’s heart.

In front of the bond of the four Himekishis that gathered in the Oda clan, the lonely girl called Uesugi Kenshin left for the depths of Bishamondo, and Kenshin turned into the god of war, Bishamonten.

Bishamonten completely awakened.

This shouldn’t be. So much fighting spirit is flooding out. Kenshin’s body that continues moving at lightning speed that can’t be seen, how does she maintain it? Even if her soul is taken over by Bishamonten, her body should still be that of a human girl. Katsuie was astonished.

“Saru! Come quickly! Uesugi Kenshin isn’t a human being anymore! You still aren’t here yet!?”

“Katsuie! I kept you waiting! The Sagara Yoshiharu corps has suddenly appeared! With a total of four thousand troops, we have snuck to the rear of the Echigo army!”

Katsuie heard the voice.

Behind the Echigo army.

The fog completely cleared away.

Katsuie’s field of vision expanded.

The detached force lead by Sagara Yoshiharu, suddenly appeared behind the Echigo army. On a fleet of ships that plunged through the swollen Tedorigawa. The members totaled a

little over four thousand. In addition to the large number of the Kawanami that handled the ships, all of the male warriors who had withdrawn including Tsuda Nobusumi were present.

“Hi. I was in time for the battle. The ‘Tedorigawa descent’ plan succeeded by a hair’s breadth, Saru-kun! Katsuie, we owe you for holding your ground to the end.”

“In the night fog, the Kawanami members did an outstanding job navigating the upper rapids of the Tedor river. The art of handling the rafts, and even making the rafts in the mountwains was pewfect.”

“Hooray! We were praised by the boss!”

“It was an imitation of the top speed construction method ‘Tsu Bei Fou (Two-by-four)’ that boss Sagara used in Sunomata!”

The Kawanami guys let out a roar of delight.

“For us river thieves this is our method, not the earthen roads. River! If the Tedorigawa swelled because of the heavy rains, our marching speed just becomes faster!”

“Having the weather as your ally, it isn’t the signature skill of only Uesugi Kenshin. At least when it comes to rivers!”

“I’m sorry Kenshin. While I know that you have a sad reason why you can’t swim, I used your weak point for this plan. Concerning the sea and river routes, you can’t have your divinely inspired strategies like when you use a land route. No, actually you might be able to. Because you are an unparalleled genius of war. But, you are afraid of water. So in that case, a chance is born with the sea and river routes....I’m sorry.”

“Sob, sob. We would lose for sure if we clashed with the Echigo army from the front. But if we wanted to do pincer strike, an ordinary march would be sensed by Kenshin-sama. Therefore we first expelled Yoshiharu-san from Shibata-sama’s camp, and separated a force of four thousand soldiers that defected. We detoured through the shortcut in Yamanaka and the Kawanami joined to build the ships at top speed. We went down the swollen rapids upstream of the Tedorigawa all at once, and took the back of the Echigo army suddenly during the battle between Shibata-sama and the Echigo army. With this, we could make the same pincer movement shape used in Kawanakajima.”

“War is an act of engineering, it’s our win this time when we built the rafts using the quick Tsu Bai Fou future method,” Kanbei snorted.

“How is it, this ‘Tedorigawa descent’ plan!? Sagara Yoshiharu’s absurd proposal, what a perfect shape! With this, I surpassed Kansuke Yamamoto! The time to raise the First Class KuroKan flag has come! Muhu!”

“To make doubly sure, the drama to get Katsuie-sama to whip Yoshiharu-san and nearly kill him — the “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” “last resort” was used. Yoshiharu-san, I’m sorry, I’m sorry. Kenshin-sama is a lover of the Hikaru Genji story, I guessed she wouldn’t be interested in reading a historical war novel like the Annals of the Three Kingdoms, thankfully it seems like my guess was correct.”

“Why!? Why are all of Simeon’s predictions slightly off, and Hanbei’s predictions are always successful?”

“That was a horrible drama. Or rather, Katsuie wasn’t playing. That fellow was only told the full story of this plan until after I was whipped and just before I was banished?”

“The Nokizaru-san’s intelligence unit that Echigo boasts is powerful. Niwa-sama and I got our stories straight beforehand and the drama called the court-martial was possible, but it would be seen through by the Nokizaru immediately if I let Shibata-sama who is bad at acting perform. So without informing Shibata-sama that it was a play, Yoshiharu-san had to make her enraged thinking that Yoshiharu-san was seriously doing night crawling.”

“I angered Katsuie too much by acting with all my might in that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, moreover I got too excited by Katsuie’s breasts midway and over did it. I thought I was seriously going to be killed....my back that Katsuie whipped still hurts. But why did Kazumasu-chan suddenly participate in the whipping? That wasn’t in the script?”

“Because Yoshiharu-san would have died if Shibata-sama whipped you one hundred times, it seems she took that into consideration.”

“Really? I see. I have to give Kazumasu-chan a tea set.”

“Simeon watched, wasn’t she just having fun?”

The guys including the Kawanami, while landing their boats one after another began to talk big again.

“Uwahahaha! We caught Uesugi Kenshin!”

“All of us single men, it would be impossible for us to abandon a pretty Himekishi!”

“Even if the Himekishis are fussy, naggy, jealous and beat and kick us men repeatedly, we wouldn’t be able to sleep soundly at all!”

“To have those fellows keep making a selfish racket as they please, they have to continue living, thus we have to become those guy’s shields!”

“If there aren’t any girls, the world would be dark! In a world where there are only men, there is no meaning even if we live!”

“Uesugi Kenshin! A man is a creature so foolish we can’t be made light of! For thousands of years, we’ll think about being dominated by a woman!”

“While being accompanied by the male warriors of Echigo, you don’t understand anything! Your vassal corps is the saaaame!”

“Besides our general is the number one lover of women! It would be impossible to leave the battlefield and abandon the Himekishis!”

When Yoshiharu was banished – the Nokizaru hadn’t suspected the true meaning of the words that Yoshiharu whispered right before he was left, they had misread Katsuie.

(Katsuie. I’m going to make Tedorigawa like “Sunomata”. Instead of building a castle, “The woodpecker”. Shingen’s role to attract the Echigo army, it isn’t possible if you aren’t the Oda clan’s strongest general.)

While they were watching, the detached force went behind the Echigo army, the monkey did it, Katsuie smiled wryly.

But Katsuie disregarded the words after that.

(Listen. Don’t try to buy time in single combat. It’s an order from Nobuna.)

While saying to become the decoy, don’t let your feeling overflow and say such an unnecessary thing. If we didn’t ignore that instruction we would have been annihilated idiot, Katsuie laughed again.

The last plan that Katsuie waited for while remaining on the battlefield — the ‘Tedorigawa descent’ was attained.

The Echigo army’s 20,000, it reached the state where it was sandwiched between Shibata Katsuie’s 16,000 troops in front, and Sagara Yoshiharu’s force of 4000 from behind.

When Kansuke Yamamoto used the woodpecker strategy in Kawanakajima, Kenshin was attacked by the Takeda army’s pincer attack.

But at that time, Kenshin saw through the woodpecker strategy beforehand, and made a surprise attack on the warriors of the detachment force lead by Takeda Shingen in Hachimanpara.

During the little time before the Takeda’s detached force that was heading to Mt. Saijo turned around and headed back to Hachimanpara, she bet everything on an all or nothing gamble to try to defeat Takeda Shingen.

However, this battle is different.

Even with the same pincer movement, she flew into a rage over Sagara Yoshiharu's betrayal, got angrier when Shibata Katsuie embraced her gently during the one-on-one battle, and focused all of her concentration and shut off her feelings in front of the beautiful cooperation between the four Himekishis. This Uesugi Kenshin was attacked when she was unguarded, a perfect surprise attack.

The Echigo army, until now had no experience with such a dangerous position.

If Kenshin didn't accept the duel with Katsuie then while preparing in her troop headquarters, even if it was a bizarre plan like the Tedorigawa descent, she would have sensed the approach of the detached force with her unique senses and seen through the plan.

But Kenshin focused all of her senses on the duel with Shibata Katsuie, and finally drew out all of her hidden military might to kill the four gathered Himekishis.

At this time, Naoe Kanetsugu who realized her own failure in not stopping Kenshin's reckless rampage was standing paralyzed in the headquarters. "To use the raging waters of the swollen Tedorigawa for a surprise attack!? Did you continue to shake Kenshin-sama's heart by every possible means to make this pincer attack succeed? Sagara Yoshiharu posed as Hikaru Genji only to be beaten half to death? This is the powerful union of the Oda clan!?" Kanetsugu groaned.

"Playing the part of Takeda Shingen who obstructed Kenshin to become a decoy, you performed the role wonderfully, Katsuie! But though I told you to not fight one-on-one, did you do so? That you are alive, it is incredible! As expected, you really are the strongest person in the Oda clan!"

When Yoshiharu shouted from horseback, Katsuie responded.

"You are late erosaruuuuu! I bet you held a grudge from when I previously whipped you and were late on purpose! If we both survive, I'll add a hundred more whiplashes!"

"You're kidding me! If you are going to add on more whippings, let me rub your tits again!"

"Uuu, shut up! If you touch me I'll kill you without asking questions!"

"Ahem. Our play was also excellent, Yoshi."

While patting the head of Kazumasu who jumped through the air and landed on the back of the horse, Yoshiharu was convinced, *the Oda clan is lucky*.

"For a reward I guess it's a tea set. How about it?"

Sagara Yoshiharu army, Tedorigawa decent!

The Echigo army was hit by a pincer attack.

In the confusion, the form of Uesugi Kenshin disappeared in front of Katsuie suddenly.

Maeda Inuchiyo and Niwa Nagahide who barely escaped death were breathing hard. "I can't move anymore. I seem to have lost all the blood in my body." They were picked up by Katsuie who dismounted her horse.

"...Strange. Kenshin can't run away..."

"What a dreadful sight. The Echigo army soldiers that are standing in such a dangerous position, they aren't disturbed at all. It seemed that the Tedorigawa descent plan was full marks, but is it possibly the worst war situation..."

Yoshiharu also immediately noticed that something wrong.

The Echigo army's formation changed.

Like a giant dragon, the jet black Echigo army soldiers became one wave and began to turn slowly.

In the center of that wave, Bishamonten, Uesugi Kenshin was standing in an unmoving pose wearing her white medicant robes.

Hanbei raised her small voice.

"Not good! That is the deadly battle formation that the Echigo army uses when they are in an inescapable position, it is the 'rolling wheel'. The Echigo army soldiers make a huge whirlpool centered on Uesugi Kenshin and strike the enemies that approach in all directions. If you come into contact, you will immediately be routed."

"This was only used once in Kawanakajima. To see such a huge mass movement. Can an army of twenty thousand soldiers really move like one creature like this?"

"Everyone in the Echigo army completely believes that Uesugi Kenshin-sama is the true Bishamonten. They have abandoned their own lives to protect Kenshin-sama. Twenty thousand sacrifices in all. The enemies who come in contact with them will also lose their life mercilessly. Friend and foe alike will be injured and lose their lives. What shouldn't be done between Sengoku Era commanders, it is an annihilation battle. A competition where all of the soldiers throw away their lives in this way, it can only be performed in a religious war. Therefore, Kenshin-sama can't use the rolling wheel formation unless she is already cornered. She only used it once reluctantly in Kawanakajima, it should have been sealed forever."

It is the forbidden move that only Uesugi Kenshin who has become Bishamonten can carry out while remaining a military commander, Hanbei was trembling while looking at the huge dark spiral that spread out across the earth.

“Muhu. It came! The rolling wheel that was used only once in Kawanakajima! Kenshin is cornered! I equalled Kansuke Yamamoto, I matched Kansuke Yamamoto!”

“Kanbei-san. This is not the situation to snort in excitement. The Takeda Shingen army that received this rolling wheel from the front during the Battle of Kawanakajima was nearly destroyed along with the Echigo army. Uesugi Kenshin was probably forced to make this decision. The Rolling Wheel formation will smash the Oda army that is performing a pincer attack from the front and back, and when it becomes a one-on-one fight with the Oda clan’s troops, they will be killed. It is the same as that time in the Battle of Kawanakajima. At that time, that Takeda Shingen-sama survived was something like a miracle. It might be because Shingen-sama is the strongest warrior equal to Kenshin-sama – at any rate, a miracle won’t occur twice.”

“Hanbei. In that case Kenshin is aiming for Shibata Katsue’s neck?”

“No. The leader of the present Oda force is Shibata-sama, but there is only one thing that Kenshin is aiming at. It is the central figure of these large-scale tactics that put her into this predicament, the neck of Yoshiharu-san.

Yoshiharu-san is going to defeat the tactics of the unrivaled undefeated Kenshin now. If he breaks through, Kenshin-sama will no longer be Bishamonten. Therefore, no matter how many sacrifices Kenshin-sama must make, Yoshiharu-san must be defeated.”

“I think I understand it. In that case, I have to charge to Kenshin’s position.”

“Y, Yoshiharu-san? Certainly Yoshiharu-san was planning on having the last move. But now that Kenshin-sama is using the rolling wheel battle formation it is dangerous! The person waiting for Yoshiharu isn’t the Uesugi Kenshin Yoshiharu-san knows anymore, it is Bishamonten!”

“At this rate, both the Echigo army and the Oda army will die. Because of my neck alone, can we sacrifice such a large number of people. Even Kenshin doesn’t wish for such a fight. That child has regretted the great damage she unleashed during the Battle of Kawanakajima all this time. Can I burden her even more?”

“Sagara-shi. The smoke screen won’t work for Kenshin, but it will work for the common soldiers of the Echigo army. It is the thieving art of the Kawanami, and can be used in order to pave a path for fwagile Sagara-ji.”

“Humu. I was formerly part of a ninja troupe, I can use the Koka ninjutsu to throw up a smoke screen. My skin will get rough, but it is for Yoshi. There is no help for it.”

“Thank you Goemon, Kazumasu-chan. The road we run down now leads to Bishamondo! At the time of her duel with Takeda Shingen, Kenshin went to meet Shingen. Shingen couldn’t force open the door to Bishamondo. Therefore we will do the opposite! I will go and meet Kenshin!”

“Don’t start talking so that guy can hear you!”

“Sob, sob. It is too dangerous. No matter what Yoshiharu-san, I can’t recommend it...”

Inuchiyo rode a horse and carried the dying Katsuie to Yoshiharu.

“Saru. I was wrong. Shouting ridicule at the Himekishis....you can’t be such a fellow, really I am, simple. Cough, cough.”

“Hey Katsuie, are you alright? You are bloody from head to foot!”

“...It’s not from me, Saru. Even if you intend to go meet Uesugi Kenshin now, stop.”

“Why not?”

With tear-filled eyes, Katsuie clung to Yoshiharu’s arm.

“That girl isn’t Uesugi Kenshin any longer. Her body and soul have been taken over by Bishamonten. Whatever you shout, it won’t be heard by Uesugi Kenshin’s ears anymore.”

“...It is because of my monkey wisdom that she was cornered. Though it was to win this battle, I angered Kenshin by all possible means and hurt her.”

“No. When she declared war against Hime-sama in Kyoto, that girl had already almost been taken over by Bishamonten! Living alone in Bishamondo for many years, continuing a one person dialogue with Bishamonten all the time....otherwise, she couldn’t fight. If she felt that she was an ordinary girl, this battle through which many human lives will be lost, it would not continue! I finally understood it. I had the opportunity to take Kenshin’s life. But, I hesitated. I wasn’t able to murder that child on the spot...half of a Himekishi’s life is burdened by the fate of a warrior in battle. However, the other half is a girl. It was as you said...”

“Katsuie. You...”

“You were always here for Hime-sama. Therefore, Hime-sama did not become a demon king. Because you were here, though she repeatedly had horrible wars, Hime-sama could keep being a human girl. But, Kenshin!”

“...Ah. All of the men in Echigo that supported Kenshin all died. Usami Sadamitsu. Naoe Yamato. Even her nemesis Nagao Masakage. But I’m alive, Katsuie. Will a living human lose to the illusion named Bishamonten. It is a ghost of a worn-out ancient age. The war with Uesugi Kenshin and Bishamonten can be finished. Together with Nobuna, we will open the era of humans.”

Yoshiharu broke loose from Katsuie’s arm and laughed.

“Uesugi Kenshin. That child is bound by a sad spell. She has a dream called Bishamonten that doesn’t end. Something like our lives are a short-lived dream. Kobayakawa-san said *“Life is but a dream.”* That is why I don’t believe we need to continue having that sad dream.”

“...I understand. Go. I only saw one clue. Kenshin’s taijutsu, it is a unique method of attack that returns the bloodthirst and fighting spirit to her opponent. I was taught that by you beforehand, when I gently drew Kenshin’s waist close to me without having killing intent — that girl showed a totally different expression than the god of war. Just like a child...it was like, she had never been embraced by a person’s hand in that way, and seemed to be looking forward to it for a long time. If I was going to kill her, I would surely have been killed. But it was impossible to kill her. Yet. Even if she was hugged by my arm and lost her life, it would have been a happy death, Kenshin said that...I couldn’t kill her.”

“Thank you. That explains why a wimp like me could give Kenshin a princess carry in the haunted house. If I am given that clue, it is enough. Katsuie.”

“Yoshiharu-san. This battle formation is completely devoted to defense. Takeda Shingen who faced the rolling wheel formation in her camp responded with the crane wing formation which is superior in defense, but still the damage was enormous. But in order to oppose Takeda and Uesugi who use cavalry as their main force, Kanbei-san prepared the latest western-style defensive battle formation. If it is for an hour, we can endure the rolling wheel formation’s fierce attack.”

“Muhu. Don’t worry, leave it to this Simeon! You guys in the detached force, I’ll show you the result of my secret training! Pick up a long spear! Bow corps, gun corps, defend the pike squad! The entire army, shift to the shape of the the spanish-style magic square, ‘Tercio!’ Originally I hid it as a trump card in order to block the cavalry corp’s charge, but it is unavoidable.”

While reading through the Namban war manuals that she bought in Sakai, Kanbei discovered it, the anti-cavalry tactics employed in Europe, the Spanish style square formation, Tercio.

In order to oppose the pressure and speed of the cavalry’s charge, the long pikemen that were specialized in anti-cavalry defenses form a square formation, and the bow and firearm soldiers placed at the four corners of the square would support the pikemen.

Naturally, in order to maintain the advanced battle formation Tercio on the battlefield, a high skill level is needed. It is impossible for the common soldiers that are part-time farmers who are only called together for war.

Pike.

Guns.

While Oda Nobuna was called ‘Fool’ for resisting the ancient customs of Japan, she thought of a new reward system called the tea set as a substitute for land, and went to great pains to separate the local samurai and form a standing army mainly composed of ‘professional soldiers.’

Since a standing army demands colossal maintenance costs, she must keep expanding trade, Nobuna got over this difficult problem by gaining control of Sakai.

In order to make up the overwhelming disadvantage that the weak soldiers of Owari have, Oda Nobuna achieved these three requirements. Here with army units of Japan, for the first time in history, the enormous European-style defensive square was possible.

“Sagara Yoshiharu. In the west for several hundred years, the overwhelming speed and destructive power of cavalry men continued to hold the position of the strongest. It is for this same reason that the Takeda cavalry corps is called the strongest in Japan right now. But, with the mass production of firearms, the the anti-cavalry square ‘Tercio’ that Hispania adopted changed everything. Now the military unit that can be used in combat in Japan, is only the standing army of Oda Nobuna. I cannot say that it can win against the Sengoku Era’s strongest Takeda cavalry and Kenshin’s rolling wheel formation, but for a period of time it can stave them off and minimize the damage. But the tanegashima got damp due to the long rain and fog today, the overwhelming defensive powers of the tercio can’t be expected. We can hold for an hour.”

In order to win, she adopted the Namban styles one by one without hesitating, Kanbei’s strategic thought was completely aligned with Nobuna. The flash of inspiration that Kanbei had that arrived at using the Hispania-type square tercio to prevent the charge of the Takeda cavalry, it was in defiance of the common sense of the samurai of Japan that cavalry are the strongest since Minamoto no Yoshitsune. The outcome that was derived by Nobuna’s foresight and her continual efforts to separate farmers and samurai, and create pikes and guns. It could be said that this is the answer Nobuna arrived at to achieve Tenka Fubu despite taking on the disadvantage of the weakest Owari soldiers.

“What is this Terushio?”

“We were trained rigorously by her in the mountain, all for this strange formation.”

“Really? While we were building the raft, you were being taught a Namban battle formation?”

All of the Kawanami looked at each other.

Yoshiharu nodded, “I asked Kanbei”

“We can only endure for an hour. I will go see Uesugi Kenshin. That child has been waiting in the depths of Bishamondo for the day that someone would come to meet her, I have that feeling.”

There was a princess that sent Yoshiharu off with a clap on the back.

In order to cross the swollen river her ceremonial dress had to be taken off, because she was wearing armor he didn't know who it was for an instant — but that cheerful voice, there was nobody else who could emit such cuteness.

“You must never hesitate, Sagara Yoshiharu. Snatch her immediately. Nobuna-san, Mitsuhide-san, or my face, if you remember them and hesitate it will be your defeat. Don't think about the things that happen after, simply give it your all to pick up the falling fruit. That is Sagara Yoshiharu. Grab it freely, pick it up. After you have picked up the fruit and given it life, whether or not the snow princess can find happiness, as long as she is alive that will be that child's own battle.”

“Ah. Thank you Yoshimoto-chan. Because Katsuie must not lose her life, I hesitated. But if I am leaving to save a life, I can go to pick it up. Whatever the result is in the future, I won't hesitate. Thanks to you, I will be able to run without wavering.”

“My my. It is fine even without thanks. If the relationship between Nobuna-san and Sagara Yoshiharu becomes complicated due to this and collapses, a love conflict will be my perfect victory. Ohohoho!”

“Because I was moved by Yoshimoto-chan just now, don't make me take it back!”

Sagara Yoshiharu charged in as a long horseman and aimed at the center of the whirlpool of the Rolling Wheel formation.

“The pikemen unit is forming a rectangle? I have never seen this mysterious formation. It doesn't appear in any military strategy books either. It isn't the crane wing or fish scale formation, it isn't even a square and circle. This is Oda Nobuna's battle —“

In the rolling wheel's camp at the center of the whirlpool.

Naoe Kanetsugu was the only allowed to stand next to Kenshin and serve her. While looking at the strange battle formation of the Oda clan that abandoned all mobility, she was astonished.

“Kenshin-sama. Perhaps this is a new formation specialized in anti-cavalry defense. There is no mobility and its offensive ability is poor, but it is totally like a moving fortress. Or, it might be Namban battle formation.”

However due to the long rain and fog, the tanegashima were damp and the battle formation can't show its true power. We should be able to win if we make a forced attack, however — Kanetsugu was puzzled.

The reason was that all of the emotions had been erased from Kenshin's voice and expressions.

Due to the terrible damage done to friend and foe alike in the Battle of Kawanakajima, she vowed not to use the “rolling wheel formation” a second time.

In that case, now, this Kenshin who let the Echigo army make the rolling wheel formation and was going to destroy everything on the battlefield, was not Kenshin.

Bishamonten completely took away Kenshin’s heart, Kanetsugu trembled.

“There is no problem, Naoe Kanetsugu. Bishamonten does not lose.”

The moment that the ‘word of god’ that Bishamonten never loses is made into a lie, the illusion of Bishamonten that possesses Uesugi Kenshin’s heart will disperse.

Bishamonten is resisting.

Sagara Yoshiharu performed night crawling on Shibata Katsuie and advocated the Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan. As a last resort, Katsuie whipped Yoshiharu and banished him. Reproducing the form of the pincer attack “Woodpecker strategy” that Kansuke Yamamoto used to try to exterminate the Echigo army in Kawanakajima, Sagara Yoshiharu reappeared with the detached force by the Tedorigawa descent. By becoming the decoy herself and attracting Kenshin’s perception herself to buy time, Shibata Katsuie’s courage let them successfully go downstream. The feeling of pity that that Katsuie showed for Kenshin when she gently held her in her arms. Entrusting their lives to each other, the cooperation of the four Himekishis of the Oda that staved off Kenshin’s violent attacks using a bond of trust until Yoshiharu’s detachment arrived. And the large-scale defensive formation that hadn’t been seen or existed in Japan, China, or Korea until now.

The unrivaled, undefeated god of war Bishamonten was cornered for the first time in her life.

Her heart had been attacked.

The Oda army, Sagara Yoshiharu, it seems like they are going to break open the door to Bishamondo that totally seals Kenshin-sama’s heart, Kanetsugu was holding her breath.

And.

The Oda army, no, Sagara Yoshiharu’s last resort, struck.

What was probably the smoke screens of the Oda’s ninjas blew up one after another.

Sagara Yoshiharu himself, as just one horseman, rushed to the center of the whirlpool of the Echigo army.

“I came to meet Uesugi Kenshin! This is the limit of the present Oda forces! The Echigo army is strong! The tanegashima were sealed by the heavy rain and fog! If this all-out war

continues with the Tedorigawa at our back, we will not be able to escape! The Echigo army will win! But more than 10,000 soldiers of both armies will die! That will be an ending that violates the spirit of justice that Uesugi Kenshin continued keeping! So I came to the rescue!”

It isn’t only the lives of the soldiers I want to rescue.

The person who continued giving justice, mercy, and hope, I will rescue Uesugi Kenshin!

Yoshiharu shouted while advancing as one horseman in the middle of the rain of arrows.

“He appeared! Sagara Yoshiharu came!”

“The womanizer monkey! Since you can’t win in a fair and square battle you gave up, do you intend to ensnare Kenshin-sama with your silver tongue!”

“Wait! He is holding a hourokuyaki in his hand!”

“He is planning to draw near Kenshin-sama and bomb her!”

“That’s wrong! People of Echigo! He is carrying a paper lantern! It isn’t hourokuyaki!”

A deadly black whirlpool. Constructed of twenty thousand deadly soldiers, the rolling wheel formation pulsed.

Yoshiharu plunged into the middle of it as a lone horseman.

Countless arrows attacked Yoshiharu.

The smoke screen that Goemon released at random to defend Yoshiharu, it was meaningless before the overwhelming number of arrows.

The horse’s neck was pulled back, avoided the storm of arrows, and Yoshiharu still advanced forward.

Such outrageously reckless behavior, it is impossible for me who isn’t a hero or the god of war, I might wet my pants, Yoshiharu thought.

When Kenshin plunged into the enemy army as a lone horseman to rescue Karasawa Castle that was besieged by thirty thousand troops, did she feel fear like I presently do? Did you want to cry that you don’t want to die? In order to overcome your fear, to fill you with courage, did you obstinately believe the fantastic story that you are the incarnation of Bishamonten?

He had intended to avoid them all, but he noticed that an arrow was stuck in his upper arm.

I'm different than the miraculous Bishamonten after all, Yoshiharu wanted to laugh at the mediocrity of this Warring States commander.

Don't completely become a hedgehog before reaching Kenshin, Yoshiharu thought.

But he didn't reduce the speed of the horse he was riding.

"I left things half-finished that night at Azuchi, really, I'm sorry – I won't waver anymore. I will carry out the way of life of Sagara Yoshiharu."

Kenshin's expression that heard Yoshiharu's call didn't change – but, faintly, her cheeks had flushed.

Only Kanetsugu who had served Kenshin since she was young, noticed that tiny abnormal event.

Naoe Kanetsugu had to decide.

There is no time. When the Oda army is crushed by the Rolling Wheel formation and half the Echigo army is lost, Kenshin-sama will be taken away by Bishamonten forever. No one will be able to open the door of Bishamondo anymore. Should I bet on Sagara Yoshiharu who is an enemy?

Sagara Yoshiharu was not an acquaintance.

But, it was said that Sagara Yoshiharu gave hope to Bontenmaru.

And Kenshin, when she saw the opening of the Amano-Iwato, she had an expression on her face that Kanetsugu had never seen.

As if she found something that she couldn't obtain unless she personally asked the boy from the future.

Was my life as the justice commander right, was it empty, was I rewarded? Sagara Yoshiharu who came from the future knows the answer to these questions, the answers that should have never been provided while Kenshin herself lived on the earth.

Kenshin **desired** an answer.

For this reason, she flew into a rage when Oda Nobuna declared that she would monopolize Sagara Yoshiharu.

With a Himekishi of the same sex, the door to Bishamondo can not be pried open. The keys to open the door still had only been partly obtained. The key named Takeda Shingen. Shibata Katsuei might have become one of the keys too. But another key is absolutely necessary.

If that was true, Usami Sadamitsu and Naoe Yamato should have become that key. But those two people are no longer in the world anymore.

I sent Kenshin-sama to Azuchi, entrusted with the faint hope that she would have a second encounter with Sagara Yoshiharu. However in Azuchi, Sagara Yoshiharu didn't open the door to Kenshin-sama. But in this battlefield, it might be possible. At any rate, this is the last opportunity to help Kenshin-sama.

Sagara Yoshiharu.

I will entrust you with Kenshin-sama once again.

“Kenshin-sama, in Azuchi, *“If I see you on the battlefield, I will overlook 50 steps in the army”*, you said that you promised Sagara Yoshiharu that. Keeping your promises on the battlefield, this is justice. If you throw away your promise, it is immoral. Will you fulfill your promise?”

Kenshin says that Bishamonten can never go against the word ‘justice’.

Justice is the very meaning of the existence of Bishamonten, because it is all of the rules of behavior.

While preparing to confront this man who bravely came as a single horseman to take Kenshin away, Kenshin silently nodded.

Kanetsugu raised her voice, “Now.”

“All of you! For fifty steps! Open the way in front of Sagara Yoshiharu! Set up a camp enclosure around the headquarters! The words of the bearer of the flag of truce, Sagara Yoshiharu, will be directly reported to Kenshin-sama!”

Sagara Yoshiharu who saw the road through the Echigo Army soldiers open up like the seas were parting, was surprised.

“Is this? Is it that? Did you remember your promise of fifty steps in Azuchi? But Bishamonten should consider me to be the greatest enemy who came to snatch Kenshin. Did somebody in the Echigo army give her a push?”

I can't think about hesitating.

If I advance, it is now or never.

Yoshiharu ran through the thin path that was opened up for fifty steps, and entered the headquarters that was set up in a hurry.

Inside the camp enclosure, was Uesugi Kenshin and Naoe Kanetsugu.

Sagara Yoshiharu.

Only three people were gathered.

Kanetsugu stepped back three steps silently, bowed down, and the people who faced each other on horseback became two people.

“As expected, Bishamonten carried out the promise of fifty steps. I came to speak. But Bishamonten, I didn’t come to meet you. I came to meet Uesugi Kenshin. Let me meet Kenshin.”

“Are you Sagara Yoshiharu?”

“It is I. Have you forgotten?”

“The daylight is dazzling. I can’t see your face well. The world of the day was always like this for me.”

The sky had gradually cleared.

Now that the sun was high in the sky, Kenshin’s eyesight had grown hazy.

Even Sagara Yoshiharu’s face, the Yoshiharu who had held her in his hands, it couldn’t be clearly recognized.

If it can’t be recognized, it was the same as if it didn’t exist.

“That’s right. When your sight is blocked, it is easy to close up your heart. So I was able to become Bishamonten.”

“I see. It seems that unless I touch you, the door won’t be opened.”

“It isn’t permitted for men to touch the god of war who is abstinent for life.”

“...Oh will you stop such a small drama. Bontenmaru is a child, but aren’t you already a fine woman? For how long do you intend to be Bishamonten, Kenshin? I already kissed your lips in Azuchi? You aren’t the celibate god of war anymore. To me, you are just an ordinary human girl.”

PIK. Kanetsugu who had prostrated herself behind Kenshin, felt her shoulders shake.

Kenshin’s eyebrows rose.

Feelings of anger were unleashed.

“You are a reprehensible person. There won’t be a second time, Sagara Yoshiharu.”

The man named Sagara Yoshiharu. You are dangerous. And on this battlefield, the promise of fifty steps had already been fulfilled. You will be killed mercilessly. Kenshin, no, Bishamonten, uttered that with an emotionless voice and raised the cross spear.

Even for Yoshiharu who was nicknamed “Dodgeball Yoshi”, this was an unavoidable attack.

Coupled with an excessive speed and trajectory outside of common sense, it was an attack that couldn’t be followed by the naked eye.

Yoshiharu couldn’t see the spearhead Kenshin lunged with and Kenshin couldn’t see Yoshiharu’s face.

Ah. The two of them were not able to meet again. The piercing light of day, it had decided Kenshin-sama’s fate.

Kanetsugu who had lost the bet despaired. Everything was over.

But this time, heaven, moved.

The wind blew.

High in the sky where the sun was shining, suddenly, a white cloud covered it.

The light of day that closed Kenshin’s eyes was blocked.

As the spearhead was just about to pierce Yoshiharu’s throat, Kenshin’s eyes found Yoshiharu’s face.

Kanetsugu held her breath.

A situation outside of this Kanetsugu’s calculations occurred. The heavens – saved Kenshin-sama.

The gentle glow of the paper lantern that Yoshiharu carried in his hand, a small light, let Yoshiharu’s face stand out in the darkness that suddenly came.

“A lantern from the O-bon Festival that decorated Azuchi Castle. It’s a present.”

“...Sagara, Yoshiharu.”

“You finally came out of the depths of Bishamondo. Kenshin. Because you continued hiding, the sky clouded over. Like with Amaterasu.”

While Kenshin’s red eyes brightened, the spear was stopped.

“A very gentle light. I can see your face well. The man who came from the future. The man who knows everything about my life. You really are, a man who exists outside of my world.”

“Oh. I am just an ordinary man covered in worldly desires. But I am perfectly alive. Carrying my own will and soul, I live my own life. Because you will change into a human being, things won’t go as you want them to and you can’t hand over your body to Bishamonten.”

“Really?”

“The me who was reflected when the Amano-Iwato was opened was surely an illusion. I don’t know how it appeared to the followers of Bishamonten either. My handsomeness was multiplied one hundred times. But I really am just an ordinary human. With a bit of a monkey face. If your military might makes you a one hundred, I’m around a 3. But, I can touch you.”

“Ah.”

The white hand that was keeping the the spear upright, Yoshiharu gently grasped it.

“I caught you. Kenshin. Let’s come down to earth. You don’t need to be afraid.”

“Such gentleness is irresponsible. Isn’t your lover Oda Nobuna?”

“I am surely irresponsible. I can only save a person’s life. I can’t rescue their soul. The only one who save your soul is you yourself.”

“I can’t obtain you. Even if I carry my unrivaled, undefeated record on the battlefield, even if I leave a legend as the justice commander, I can’t obtain you. You intend to torment me?”

“Ah. I am going to torment you. I will drag you down to earth, and you will live and suffer as a human being. I won’t let you “escape to death”. Because I will also suffer, we will share it equally.”

“Stop it. The things I really want, I won’t be able to get. Takeda Shingen is a woman same as me. And you are Oda Nobuna’s. I can’t steal you. Why? I didn’t choose such a lonely way of life? I, truly, never wanted to become god!”

“At last I can hear your real feelings. Really, what did you want, Kenshin?”

“I. As a human being – as a person, I wanted to be loved.”

“You are loved. Katsuchiyo-chan. Usami Sadamitsu. Naoe Yamato. Even Nagao Masakage. The officers of the Echigo Army that are giving their lives to protect you in this rolling wheel formation. The feelings of those who continued running on the battlefield next to you, the heart that worships an idol, it is something beyond faith. Even if you stop being

Bishamonten, even if you become a human, nobody will abandon you. You just tried not to see it.”

“You are wrong. If the sun is shining, even if I wanted to see, it can’t be seen....stop it Sagara Yoshiharu. Don’t embrace me anymore. If you kiss me a second time, I will kill you.”

“That’s fine. Goemon isn’t here this time, and the Himekishi here who has the helmet with the crest of ‘love’ seems to be tight-lipped. As for me, I have no excuses.”

“Horrible. Stop it. This...I, though I can’t be joined with you....Sagara...”

“...Uesugi Kenshin. With this, I will have kissed you twice.”

On horseback, Kenshin tried to say something as she was embraced by Yoshiharu.

“Only justice is not enough, Kanetsugu adopted that stance. Sagara Yoshiharu, I -”

Why I would die if I made war with Oda Nobuna, Kenshin understood the meaning of the prediction of Bishamonten.

Because I was destined to fall in love with a human man. My destiny has been fulfilled. The time when I return to heaven with Bishamonten has come. Ah. Strange. I don’t have any regrets.

Her small heart was seized with pain.

Kenshin’s body suddenly, like a puppet whose strings were cut, fell off her horse.

Yoshiharu and Kanetsugu rushed over to Kenshin’s position at the same time and lifted her body.

“Yoshiharu-sama. Kenshin-sama’s heart has stopped!”

“Is it illness?”

“No. At the moment that she believed that the prophecy was fulfilled, Kenshin-sama’s spiritual strength – it stopped her heart. The curse of Bishamonten is still binding Kenshin-sama. She was originally a person with a weak body. In battle after battle, her mind and body were both at their limit!”

“Then it is okay, Naoe Kanetsugu. Because Kenshin has not yet said ‘I love you’ to me. The prophecy hasn’t been fulfilled.”

“M, my name?”

“I already knew it. The general that would attach something as crazy as the crest of ‘love’ to their helmet, there is only one in the world. The one who pushed Bishamonten who had shut herself in the rolling wheel formation to honestly abide to the fifty step promise, it was you right?”

“That’s right. Honestly, Kenshin-sama was looking forward to the man who would take her out of the rolling wheel formation, I believed that was the case.”

“Thus, the role of waking up the sleeping princess, you are okay with me?”

“Of course. Because it is your fault she became this way, you should wake her up. In spite of being Oda Nobuna’s lover, you also will have kissed Kenshin-sama three times. What on earth are you thinking. Besides, there should have been other methods to rescue Kenshin-sama’s heart.”

“After is for after. I’ll think about that after picking up her life! I’m relying on you, Naoe Kanetsugu. You who is hopelessly weak in battle.”

“It’s fine! I want you to change the fate of Kenshin-sama! Kenshin-sama is Oda Nobuna’s arch-enemy. If you revive her here, we will confront the Oda clan by any means and one will fall. But Kenshin-sama was the justice commander up until now, she continued to forgive her enemies! Even if one of our supporting vassals is missing, and they are missing two, even if she becomes all alone, the righteous war was carried out until the very end! Please, Kenshin-sama’s justice, please respond with your justice! I want you to return Kenshin-sama’s mercy with your mercy!”

“Understood, Naoe Kanetsugu. That the number of days that Kenshin could live as a human is just that one ordinary day spent in Azuchi, such an ending is impossible.

In addition, I have a firm believe. Kenshin-sama won’t die yet. Because those who will save her life, it isn’t just my power -”

Yoshiharu handed Naoe Kanetsugu the lantern. “It is the continuation of the O-bon festival. Take it.”

On behalf of the Japanese of the future, I will return your justice, Kenshin.

Incidentally, you became partially aware of it.

The thing you sought after, that thing is inside your heart,

Kenshin looked at the blue planet that shined in the darkness.

That is the earth I lived on.

I, still, wanted to live, Kenshin thought.

The love and hatred for Sagara Yoshiharu who wanted to drag me down to earth, the confrontation with Oda Nobuna, the conclusion with Takeda Shingen, everything, it all has been left on the ground.

I have been invited to this heavenly world once before. I lost father, and threw myself into the Kujira sea from the Oyashirazu cliff. I awoke in the world of the heavens and encountered Bishamonten. Live as Bishamonten, take up the sword on the battlefield and demonstrate justice, forgive evil with your heart of mercy, and die if you fall in love – those prophetic words were described by Bishamonten. But why. The prophecy has been fulfilled already, though I am trying to return to heaven, there is no sign or appearance of Bishamonten.

The next moment.

Kenshin fell to the ground.

On a sand dune that continued endlessly, she stood still.

I fell to earth?

In the sandstorm, the shadows of two men swayed and moved.

Kenshin recognized the faces of the two men.

Usami Sadamitsu.

Naoe Yamato.

The strategist and prime minister that brought Kenshin up as the justice commander, pushed Kenshin into the position of daimyo of Echigo, and gave up their lives to Kenshin's holy war and died.

Unforgettable faces.

After parting with them, I never met them in a dream, Kenshin realized.

“It is already fine, Torachiyo. No, Nagao Kagetora. Or was it different? Now, it is Uesugi Kenshin. This guy is your reward.”

While tossing a stuffed rabbit to her, Usami Sadamitsu laughed.

Kenshin caught the stuffed animal in her arms.

“You fought all alone and it was painful. It was wrong. I who pushed my dreams on you when you were young, I was selfish. It is already fine. The dream of Bishamonten has ended. From now on, return to being a human girl. Follow your own dream.”

You weren't selfish, Usami, you showed me my way of life, so I could live as my very best.

So, it was conveyed.

Even without uttering a word, it had been transmitted to Usami.

"Hihi. Your face looks like it has completely become an adult woman's. Good. Come to earth, put on beautiful clothes and dance."

The thin man who was calmly standing next to Usami, Naoe Yamato.

"Ojou-sama. The keys to open the door to Bishamondo have been gathered, and the door is open. You are already no longer Bishamonten. The curse has been undone. Speak of love. Call for it."

Really, am I allowed, Naoe Yamato.

In the name of righteous war, I took many lives.

"Usami. Naoe Yamato. I became the justice general in order to compensate for my father's sins. It was only natural. But, I took the position of Echigo's shugo from older brother. I gained the position of Echigo Shugo from the Uesugi clan main house and became the Uesugi clan's head and obtained all of the roles of the Kanto Kanrei. I fought with the husband of my elder sister, Nagao Masakage, and it resulted in deaths. I didn't respond to Nagao Masakage's courtship and finally he was repaid with death. Without being able to kill Nagao Masakage with my own hands, I let Usami who was unable to just watch stain his own hands, and I also let Usami die. I was unable to save either of you two. Naoe Yamato, I let you carry out a life of bachelorhood. Though I let Takeda Nobushige and other officers and soldiers die in Kawanakajima, I couldn't kill Takeda Shingen and also couldn't be killed by Takeda Shingen either. While promising that I wouldn't invade other countries, I seized Ecchu and Noto through armed force. Finally, Oda Nobuna's lover, I wanted him next to me, I wanted to steal him. I desired a kiss from Sagara Yoshiharu."

Can I possibly be forgiven?

Two hands were placed onto Kenshin's head as she collapsed onto the sand.

"It has already been forgiven. You let many soldiers die in battle, but you saved more lives by continuing to show justice and mercy, you helped save their souls. Over and over again throughout your lifetime."

"Yes. Ojou-sama continued meeting every evil with righteousness and mercy. Ojou-sama's will was transmitted four hundred years into the future."

Usami Sadamitsu and Naoe Yamato.

That's right. I was loved by these two all this time. How much she had been loved, Kenshin at last recognized it.

The thing that I had been searching for all this time, it was within my heart.

"The crime where you took the seat of Echigo's shugo from your older brother is forgiven. The crime of obtaining the Echigo shugo, family headship of the Uesugi clan, and the Kanto Kanrei from the Uesugi main family is forgiven."

"The quarrel you had with your older sister's husband, Nagao Masakage, I forgive the crime that lead to deaths. That you did not respond to Nagao Masakage's courtships and he was repaid with death, I forgive that crime."

"Letting Usami Sadamitsu dirty his hands and the crime of letting Usami Sadamitsu die, it is forgiven."

"The crime of letting Naoe Yamato go through his life as a bachelor, it is forgiven. The crime of killing Takeda Nobushige and other officers and soldiers in Kawanakajima, it is forgiven."

"The crime of being unable to defeat Takeda Shingen or be killed by Shingen is forgiven."

"The crime of seizing Ecchu and Noto after vowing not to invade other countries, it is forgiven."

"The crime of wanting to steal Oda Nobuna's lover, wanting to have him next to you, it is forgiven."

"The crime of desiring a kiss from Sagara Yoshiharu is forgiven."

I didn't want to find it, because I didn't want to face the sorrow from losing Usami and Naoe Yamato. If I faced it, my heart would be torn apart by grief. I can't be Bishamonten anymore. I have become a simple human girl.

"Well then. Thank you for everything until today. Our lives spent raising you and protecting you, it was given meaning. The paper lantern of the O-bon festival, it will soon disappear. We are out of time."

"This is farewell, Ojou-sama. It is I that made your older sister marry Masakage. Not you. Thus I decided to go through my life as a bachelor. Ojou-sama, there is no reason why you must carry out a vow of celibacy through your life. You showed justice in these chaotic times. After this, please have your own dream. I pray it will be a happy dream. This is last order of Naoe Yamato to Ojou-sama."

When Kenshin raised her face, the two figures weren't there anymore.

“Ah....ah.....ahhhhhh....”

They died.

They disappeared.

They left.

Usami Sadamitsu.

Naoe Yamato.

Seized by grief that she could no longer endure.

Tears.

Usami Sadamitsu died, Naoe Yamato died, the tears that couldn't flow when she heard that, they could no longer stop.

“U...UWAHHHHHHH!”

As Kenshin's body bent over, while writhing on the sand dune, she kept shouting the names of the two of them.

“AHHHH, AHHHHHHHHH!”

Kenshin's feelings, her emotions, they were sharper than an ordinary person.

Unbearable sorrow.

Suffering that was beyond description.

In response to this grief, in order to protect Kenshin's fragile heart.

The shadow of Bishamonten that should have disappeared permanently appeared in the sky again, it approached Kenshin who was writhing and crawling on the ground.

But.

“Your role is already over, Bishamonten. I'll take you with me. That bastard Usami, on the pretense of going sailing, brought me here.”

Suddenly standing behind Kenshin, the big black eyebrows of the man who cut the shadow of Bishamonten in half with a single sword strike and erased him, with her sharp eyes, Kenshin remembered them.

Nagao Masakage.

Kenshin's political opponent. The old enemy who struggled for the position of daimyo of Echigo. Though he was the husband of her older sister, he never tried to hide his desire to make Kenshin his wife, the man whose ambition was to own Kenshin until he died.

In the end, he was assassinated by Usami Sadamitsu to try to prevent the splitting of Echigo. Usami also died with Masakage.

"Nagao, Masakage."

Why would this man appear before me, why would this man erase the shadow of Bishamonten, Kenshin questioned.

Masakage was just as arrogant as he was in life.

He bared his white teeth and laughed.

"How is it Kenshin. You lost Usami, you lost Naoe Yamato, and you couldn't obtain either Takeda Shingen nor Sagara Yoshiharu. Is it heartrending? Is it painful? Are you sad? That is the life of a human. That is love. If you say you love people, I'm satisfied. This present face, I wanted to see this crying face. It is the face of a crying girl that is begging for love shamefully. Your soul has now fallen to earth."

But, the smiling face of a demon was there.

After Masakage finished laughing he bit his lip, and with lonely eyes that Kenshin had never seen before, he stared at Kenshin.

"Kenshin. It really was a long time. The fight between you and I is over. It is your victory. As for me who has died, I can't touch you anymore. But you are alive. While you live, you can touch it, and it is possible to struggle in order to obtain it – you became a "human".

When Kenshin awoke again, it wasn't in the heavenly world, and it wasn't the sand dune.

The Echigo Army headquarters.

While Naoe Kanetsugu put Kenshin's head on her lap, "It is good that you returned" she said with teary eyes.

"...Kanetsugu. Is Sagara Yoshiharu alive?"

"He is alive and returned to the Oda army. We made a deal. Kenshin-sama collapsed suddenly, and after that the control of the Echigo army remained in perfect order, and continued

to maintain the shape of the rolling wheel formation beautifully. The Oda army that abandoned their mobility to make a square formation can't close in for an attack, this battle is the victory of the Echigo army. While the Echigo army returns Sagara Yoshiharu, the Oda army gives up on the Tedorigawa northern coast and will retreat to Echizen. The Echigo army won't pursue the Oda troops across the river. Oda Nobuna will be in command in the next battle, and that will become the magnificent final battle. I exchanged this promise with the enemy side's tactician, Takenaka Hanbei. Even Kenshin-sama would want to avoid an annihilation war when you are absent. After Oda Nobuna joined this army with the forces she leads in Echizen, they want to meet for a decisive battle once again. The interests of both parties were equal."

"...Takenaka Hanbei. She gave the Echigo army the honor of a huge win, and took back Sagara Yoshiharu as soon as she knew that I collapsed. Besides, the Echigo army is an army of justice, we can't chase after the defenseless Oda army as it crosses the river. She predicted everything perfectly. She is a courageous strategist."

"To the officers and men of the Echigo army, it was told that Kenshin-sama had her illness from her time of the month (menstrual cramps) suddenly, but would be fine if you rested quietly in bed for half a month. Because everyone knows the manner of Kenshin-sama's illness, nobody was suspicious. Furthermore, the Echigo army that made the Oda army retire to Echizen still has its unrivaled and undefeated record."

I wanted to keep Sagara Yoshiharu in this camp until Kenshin-sama awoke, but I was unable, Kanetsugu lowered her head.

"If Sagara Yoshiharu faces the awakened Kenshin-sama, he might be attracted to Kenshin-sama's spirit, and might not be able to return to Oda Nobuna, therefore he left before Kenshin-sama woke up."

"I see. Though I am sad, it is a very happy thing, Kenshin muttered.

"The Oda army isn't a match for the Echigo army, they abandoned Kaga and fled, that is what is being spread to the world. But the land can be recaptured in battle, and the myth of the undefeated Echigo army will end if Oda wins the next battle. The attack speed of the Echigo army exceeded Oda Nobuna's reserve army's, and there was a possibility that the Shibata Katsuie army and Oda Nobuna army might have been destroyed one after another. Above all, the unity of the Oda clan is in danger if Sagara Yoshiharu is taken. So they abandoned their reputation to pick up the fruit. The strategist called Takenaka Hanbei is terrifying isn't she?"

"The person who built that mysterious defensive formation, is the other tactician Kuroda. It seems that that was a Namban battle formation that was adopted to stop the charge of the Takeda cavalry and the Echigo army."

"So....from the Nambans."

Somehow Takenaka Hanbei and Kuroda. They harmonize perfectly. The two prided tacticians of the Oda army, in the next fight they might give me the first defeat of my life, Kenshin though.

“When he left, Sagara Yoshiharu left a message with me. To ask Kenshin-sama.”

“Kanetsugu. Sagara Yoshiharu doesn’t have such an indifferent way of talking. Please mimic it.”

“Mimic him? Moreover, a monkey imitation?”

“Please do it.”

Because Kenshin sulked when asked, Kanetsugu was made to play the the act called a monkey imitation.

“...Naoe Kanetsugu, tell Kenshin. If Kenshin was killed this time, there might not have been any more battles. Therefore if soldiers die in battle from now on, it is my crime. I’ll shoulder it.”

That is a poor imitation, a wry smile appeared on Kenshin’s face.

Still, Kanetsugu continued her serious monkey imitation. Each word was accurate to the end.

“Kanetsugu. While spending the one day with Kenshin in Azuchi, I noticed it. Kenshin isn’t alone. In Kenshin’s heart, there is a large number of people. The salvation and love that Kenshin sought was there from the beginning. I just intruded shamelessly at the end and opened the door. The “future” that I know has been altered. Decide your future with your own will. Finish living your own life to not have any regrets, the road that you walk with your own feet will be our future, please tell Kenshin that.”

While Kenshin muttered, “thank you, Sagara Yoshiharu,” she remembered the figures of the larger number of men who left this earth and appeared before her -

(Good-bye. Usami. Naoe Yamato. Masakage. At last I understand. For me, there isn’t an unloved person in earth or heaven.)



“In the northern sky, is that a shooting star? One. Two. Three.”

While invading Matsudaira Motoyasu’s Mikawa province, Takeda Shingen who had started the long Nagashino Castle capture muttered while watching the star. (If Kansuke

Yamamoto who was good at divining through astronomy was alive, how would he have seen this star?)

In order to send a rear guard to Nagashino Castle that was surrounded by the Takeda army, it is said that Matsudaira Motoyasu marches to Shitara field with the Mikawa army.

Without learning your lesson, do you intend on challenging me on the field? That glasses tanuki. She should have been weak, but she became very bold. Taigen Sessai, it is worthwhile that I kept my eyes on the one who you made into Imagawa Yoshimoto's right-hand man after you died.

There was a despicable rumor that swept over the Tokai district for a time that when she was decimated by Takeda Shingen in Mikatagahara and had to scramble and flee she pooped her pants while on horseback.

While surrounding Nagashino Castle in this way, a large amount of information was made available to Shingen from a large number of ruffians that were sent to Kyoto and Azuchi Castle.

As for Oda Nobuna, to hinder Shingen's movement to the utmost, she sent out disturbing information. In the shadows of the cheerful festival in Azuchi, there was a secret war between the ninjas, the traps that were devised to deceive the Takeda secret agents and ensnare them, countless information wars had been waged.

But, the Takeda information network is carefully organized by the Sanada Shinobi. It can't be tricked.

The "Strongest" of the Takeda Four Heavenly Kings, the Himekishi Yamagata Masakage who wore crimson armor on her small-sized body, imparted an important matter to Shingen.

"Shingen-sama. Uesugi Kenshin and Shibata Katsuie with Sagara Yoshiharu clashed in Tedorigawa. The battle ended in victory for the Echigo army and the Oda army withdrew from Kaga. They were pushed back to Echizen."

"Was the strife between Shibata Katsuie and Sagara Yoshiharu that lead to discord and his withdrawal from the battlefield an act? I thought it might be a 'last resort', but it was admirably achieved."

"Uesugi Kenshin was tricked as expected and was lured to the Tedorigawa northern coast where a pincer attack was performed."

"And the Oda army was destroyed? But that Kenshin, even if she was caught in the same shape as the 'woodpecker', she wouldn't be finished easily. Was she made to use the rolling wheel formation?"

“Even though it was used, it didn’t become an extermination battle like that time in Kawanakajima. Sagara Yoshiharu reached Uesugi Kenshin’s position as a herald for a truce, Uesugi Kenshin had a bad illness and collapsed unconscious right after.

The Oda army crossed the Tedorigawa with their whole army to escape and the movement of the Echigo army was stopped.”

Shingen dropped the large war fan she held in her hand.

“Kenshin? Illness? Is she safe?”

“Please calm down. She is resting for half a month. It seems she will recover with that.”

“Is that so. The will of heaven didn’t side with Kenshin.”

“Ku. Shingen-sama. Your face was dismayed when you heard that Kenshin collapsed. Like a girl who is completely in love. I’m jealous.”

“Sh, shut up. With this, Takeda will arrive at the capital first. But it is strange. It should have been a one in a million chance for Sagara Yoshiharu to kill Kenshin. In order to save his lord from her dilemma, there isn’t a guy who would spare her life.”

“It is said that Sagara Yoshiharu nursed Kenshin after she collapsed, and helped her escape death.”

“...Is that so. That guy, did he pick up the fallen fruit. If that is the case, Kenshin may have already been released from the cage of Kawanakajima...originally Kenshin must have had the destiny where she died after selecting the battle of Tedorigawa as her last battle. Sagara Yoshiharu changed the future again.”

“What kind of thing is this?”

“It seems that Kenshin’s time that had stopped in Kawanakajima has begun to flow again. Though I recommended that Kenshin encounter Sagara Yoshiharu herself, I feel like I have been robbed of Kenshin by Sagara Yoshiharu. My chest hurts.”

The person who can drag the god of war, Uesugi Kenshin, down to earth, it can only be Japan’s strongest general.

In order to put a defeat on Kenshin’s record and drop her to the ground, I acquired the strength equal to and surpassing Bishamonten while in a human body, I had to become a commander unparalleled in history.

Why did I have to grow and become “the great commander Takeda Shingen”, why did I keep making large numbers of victims in my clan and the vassal corps, why did I continue

struggling to defeat the unrivaled undefeated god of war, Uesugi Kenshin, Shingen felt like she completely understood it.

And yet, the visitor from outside the temporal axis of this world, Sagara Yoshiharu -

Are you going to steal Uesugi Kenshin away.

The mission that I should accomplish, did Sagara Yoshiharu accomplish it?

I am jealous of that boy, Shingen thought.

“I am a woman, he is a man. When he appeared in front of Kenshin at the opening of the Amano-Iwato, Sagara Yoshiharu finally managed to open the door to Bishamondo, but those conditions are unfair. I had no way to break Kenshin other than battle. Haha.”

“Shingen-sama. As a girl, please don’t be jealous of that boy. Five times, Shingen-sama fought against Kenshin in Kawanakajima. Pouring in all your efforts. At the last moment, Sagara Yoshiharu just brought the last piece.”

“Sagara Yoshiharu is strong. If it is only based in spearmanship it will be a losing battle, but he’ll steal the heart of the Himekishi before you know it. Though there is no lover more fearful than the asura Oda Nobuna, he won’t consider the consequences. Rather than calling him the world’s greatest con-man, he is the incomparable ladykiller. Even I am a young girl. I can never hate that fellow. He seems totally like my younger brother. If I say such a sweet thing, I wonder if I can win?”

“Haha. Shingen-sama will win. You will win and hoist the flag of Seta. Kenshin who fell down to earth is also waiting for Shingen-sama. To fight against Shingen-sama with the world at stake. At the time that Shingen-sama and Kenshin reach a conclusion, when the legend of the battle between the two of you ends, the chaotic Warring States Era will also end.”

“In Kawanakajima, Kenshin became impatient and ran into my headquarters as a single horseman. Next time, I must go to her. As Sagara Yoshiharu did so.”

“Yes. Your dream, it mustn’t end as a dream. To grab it, you must reach out your hand.”

Shingen nodded.

Tonight, we celebrate for Kenshin.

The souls of the people who died at Kawanakajima have probably returned to heaven.

“Masakage. The war council is over for now. Let’s drink. Call all of the four heavenly kings. Call Shouyo (逍遙軒), Sanada, and Sarutobi. I’ll cook red bean porridge. Tonight’s appetizer is salt from Echigo. It hasn’t gotten damp?”

Yamagata Masakage who rarely laughed, smiled.

“Yes. That is an important gift from Uesugi Kenshin. In order to not absorb moisture, it was stored properly. It’s fine.”

Chapter 5 – Change in the Mori Front

Echizen, Kitanosho Castle.

Shibata Katsuie's castle.

After quietly crossing the Tedorigawa in front of the Echigo army, Shibata Katsuie and Sagara Yoshiharu who succeeded in withdrawing from Kaga safely, joined with the thirty thousand soldiers from Azuchi lead by Nobuna, at Kitanosho castle.

A war council was held immediately.

As for Imagawa Yoshimoto who doesn't interfere with military affairs, "for now there is a break in the war", she sat next to Yoshiharu and spread her fan.

"Riku. Yoshiharu. Manchiyo, Inuchiyo, and Sakon are safe. Though we lost Kaga and the Tedorigawa northern coast was given to the enemy, it is great that the whole army could be evacuated safely. It is excellent that you all lived and we could meet again. We can regain Kaga if we win the next battle, but your life is something which can't be recovered if lost. Even if we won against the Echigo army."

Nobuna laughed while feeding Inuchiyo uiro.

Since Yoshiharu and Katsuie's vassal group returned safely, the tension that came from having to confront the Echigo army led by the god of war directly was finally relieved.

The two contrary feeling mingled together into an expression that seemed to be smiling and crying.

"I'm sorry Hime-sama! Saru and Takenaka Hanbei built up layer upon layer to make the 'Last resort' and the 'Tedorigawa Descent', but it still fell just short of missing Uesugi Kenshin!"

"Katsuie is probably angry that she was fooled and got seriously angry," Yoshiharu mocked her. Katsuie silently chucked a tea set at Yoshiharu, and only quit when Nobuna said "Stop it, it's wasteful".

"At any rate, it is regrettable about Kazumasu's tanegashima. If there was no rain and fog, maybe one shot might have skimmed Kenshin's shoulder. Though she is an enemy, Kenshin seems to be blessed by the heavens and earth...."

"Still, Riku is badly wounded. For the strongest commander in the Oda clan to suffer so many wounds. Uesugi Kenshin is that strong?"

“Yes. Not to speak of her tactical skill, she is so strong that you can’t see the bottom of her power in single combat either. Without the help of everybody, I would have been long dead. I was nearly going to let Nagahide die. I have to devote myself more!

On the battlefield against a cute enemy leader, my heart was swayed...”

“I want the power to assist Ojou-sama! I won’t fall in love until my martial arts have reached beyond Uesugi Kenshin! I might miss my marriageable age and be mistaken for Yoshitaka Kuki, but I don’t care!” While Katsuie was fully motivated and had high spirits, “Riku, I think someone who falls in love becomes stronger,” Nobuna smiled wryly.

“Is, is, is that right? Hime-sama thinks so too? T, T, Truly, I, I, I, p, p, p, perhaps, made a b, b, blunder....”

“Riku is probably already strong enough? Rather than carrying out complete devotion to just martial arts, I think it is better to polish the sharp sensitivity that can perceive the weaknesses in a person’s heart. To stand in the position of your opponent and understand their thoughts and feelings, it is probably necessary for a head of a household? When Saru served the Mori clan, it seems he acquired this sense before he knew it. Riku seems to be at the stage where she is confused from having to fight a Himekishi like Kenshin on the battle. You can get stronger.”

“Hime-sama has completely grown up! You were a child until just the other day. I’m going to cry of joy! Kuu!”

“I, I am fine. Riku has to do it herself. Fall in love!”

“Even if you say so, err, I am the chief vassal of the Oda clan whose social position only matches with other Himekishis, there is no opportunity to meet a gentleman...Nobusumi has a wife and children, and only the monkey can be found....”

Because Nobuna teased her saying that she would have to perform harakiri if she made a pass at Yoshiharu, Katsuie suddenly pulled out her short sword. “Uaaa! If such a thing happens with Saru, it is the end! Ah, no, I’m not saying anything about Hime-sama’s taste in men! I’m sorry! I will commit harakiri!” She began her habitual disturbance.

“Wait. Katsuie-dono held out on the battlefield until the end, took on all of Uesugi Kenshin’s divine powers of concentration, let the difficult pincer attack succeed, and above all returned alive. You returned alive and met Hime-sama again. The Echigo Army couldn’t be defeated, but the worst outcome where the present Hokuetsu district forces and the army lead by Hime-sama were each individually defeated by the Echigo army was avoided. 90 points.”

Niwa Nagahide smiled while she hit Katsuie’s shoulder.

“Oh, I carelessly failed to kill Kenshin, it was impossible for me. If it was Mi-chan, then she would have been killed beautifully. This is fine.”

Kazumasu also laughed.

“If I let Riku get married and have a family, maybe her habit of being so eager to perform harakiri immediately will also be cured. But Yoshiharu. During your negotiations in the depths of the rolling wheel formation Uesugi Kenshin suddenly collapsed, what happened?

That can’t have been the true purpose of the ‘Hikaru Genji Rokujouin plan’, rather than a series of plays to quarrel with Katsuie by night crawling, but to get Uesugi Kenshin in the inner citadel of Azuchi Castle....”

While stuffing her her mouth with uiro, Inuchiyo nodded in a grand way and agreed.

“...Suspicious. Recently, Yoshiharu’s new nickname is ‘Ladykiller Yoshi’.”

Shock.

Yoshiharu broke into a cold sweat.

“Th that’s. Nobuna, Inuchiyo.”

“Haha. Okay. If you said that you will bring Kenshin into Rokujouin to seal the agreement, it seems like you will have crossed a line that shouldn’t be crossed. I wonder if it was to the degree that you exchanged a kiss at most. I would be jealous as to want to let you commit suicide, but because you saved Riku and everyone’s lives, I couldn’t punish you.”

“Y, y, yes. W, w, what have you understood?”

“Well. If you crossed the line with other women, you should have earnestly climbed Mt. Koya in fear of me at this time right? You wouldn’t be so stupid as to cross the line and show your face in front of me right? If it is just a kiss, a sufficient punishment would be chopping off one leg don’t you think? Right, Yoshiharu?”

Yoshiharu trembled violently unintentionally.

“I’m just kidding. I’ll overlook it this time. So Yoshiharu, the serious mission that you burdened yourself of your own accord is called “saving the life of Himekishis”. Even so, that belief was so strong that it defeated the unrivaled, undefeated Bishamonten. When a girl lover goes to that extent, I can’t complain anymore.”

“I, I, I’m sorry!”

“Alright. The princess who was troubled by a bad dream, did she wake up?”

“Ah. As Kenshin is still alive, it appears that she has woken up.”

“I see. Then I won’t lend Yoshiharu to the princess any more. The ending, Kenshin and I will arrive at it.”

Nobuna’s expression as she stared at Yoshiharu was gentle.

Nobuna seems to harbor a kind of sympathy for the much, much lonelier Kenshin.

But if I do the same to another Himekishi next, it might become a difficult scene of bloodshed at that time, Yoshiharu thought.

Not to mention, if I temporarily lose to the temptation and make a move on Yoshimoto, there will be no use arguing and it will probably be beheading.

“I can’t help being astounded by the attack speed of the Echigo army. When the Echigo army dispatched troops to Kanto for the first time, Hojo Ujiyasu had no choice but to throw away both Ueno and Musashi and shut herself in Odawara Castle before Kenshin’s lightning-like fierce attacks. In this situation if I abandon Hokuriku, the Oda army will be shut up in Azuchi Castle too. Then it would be a loss. The enemy who is starting a war to invade the capital isn’t only the Echigo army. There is also Takeda and Mori.”

“Is there a possibility that we can reconcile with Uesugi Kenshin? Even if reconciliation is impossible, is it not possible to at least put off the decisive battle?” Nobuna asked Hanbei and Kanbei as Hanbei shook her head.

“Even if she has become a human, Kenshin-sama is the justice warrior. It never occurred to her to change her lifestyle as the justice warrior. Once she gave an “agreement” to have the Ashikaga shogun depend on her, there will be no way to stop her invasion of the capital. On the other hand, if Nobuna-sama arrives at Echizen, Kenshin-sama will come out seeking a fair and square final battle. Unless the peace between Takeda Shingen-sama and Hojo Ujiyasu-sama breaks.”

“Dearuka. In order to build a new Japan, it seems that Uesugi Kenshin has to be defeated along with the Ashikaga family.”

“There is one more thing. For this war, Kenshin changed into a Sengoku daimyo that stole the land of other countries. As soon as she changed, she finished off the three countries Ecchu, Noto, and Kaga in one go, and her national power increased to 1.4 million koku, equal to Takeda Shingen. In addition, even though Kenshin’s weak point is ruling territory, there is the young strategist, Naoe Kanetsugu. While that girl is weak in battle, she is a genius in regards to internal affairs. The current Uesugi Kenshin is not an opponent you can bring into a long war as before, or possible to deceive with political ability and tricks. Unless we win quickly, she will keep pushing steadily.”

“Takeda Shingen though is impossible, to keep fighting with that monster of war and continue being tied”, Kanbei added while complaining.

“I got it, Harima. But, I must match the justice of Kenshin who followed the conditions of the withdrawal from Tedorigawa and returned Yoshiharu to me with my own justice. I’ll dispatch some military couriers to Kenshin. With this, it is now lending and borrowing.”

“Hmm? Couriers? Will you send salt?”

“Sob, sob. Was it possibly brought from Azuchi?”

“The war we are going to perform now, is a war of change to give birth to a new Japan. Without personal grudges, I want to have a magnificent final battle with Kenshin.”

“But Nobuna. What will you do about Takeda Shingen who is surrounding Nagashino castle? With the Sengoku Era’s dragon and tiger as opponents, to fight two fair and square decisive battles simultaneously is reckless. We have to at least reach a stalemate with one of the fronts.”

“That’s right, Sagara-dono. The information that the Echigo army defeated the Oda army in Tedorigawa has been spread to the whole country. If they regard this as a good opportunity and Mori to the west starts an attack in earnest, then the situation will become one where the Oda clan is surrounded on all sides. Two points.

“With this, the second Oda encirclement has been completed. It was rather difficult even with Honbyo Temple that doesn’t have battling as its main duty, and if the Honbyo Temple attacked, it was potentially possible to buy time by moving the Yamato Goshou to Honbyo Temple,” the always optimistic Kanbei had a grim expression.

Hanbei on the contrary continued thinking of a way to break through. “Now that the Honbyo Temple riot was brought to an end, I can see a route to take the world by having a final round of battles of samurai family versus samurai family. We have seized a positive situation.”

“With Honbyo Temple’s encirclement, they caused riots all over the country one after another using their followers. But this encirclement is the the united front of the strongest of the Sengoku Era, Takeda and Uesugi. Whichever one is more troublesome, it’s a difficult place. Additionally, I can’t use my trick of anticipating what will happen with my future knowledge since this has already taken a different shape from the history I know.”

I was able to reduce the number of people killed in battle by ending the riot early, and avoid the road that lead to Nobuna becoming the demon king, but the reason the degree of difficulty for this ordeal is so high is my fault, Yoshiharu groaned.

Tsuda Nobusumi brought in a messenger from the Tanba front.

“Wait Ane-ue. Saru-kun. A herald came from Mitsuhide. It is an urgent request.”

Akechi Mitsuhide returned to the Tanba front and restarted the fight to subjugate Tanba.

The army of the supreme leader of Chugoku, the Mori clan, consisted of two battalions, Kikkawa Motoharu's San'in army, and Kobayakawa Takakage's San'yo army.

Kobayakawa's San'yo district was defeated in the naval battle against the Oda clan, and subsequently was moving to capture Harima and Settsu through the land route. Yamanaka Shikanosuke was in Harima's Himeji Castle to prevent this. Probably because she suffered such a crushing defeat in the naval battle, Kobayakawa Takakage had become more cautious, and she also had to dismiss the traitor called Ukita Naoie from the front line. Because she can't put her full trust in the last of the "Sengoku Era's Three Great Villains", Ukita Naoie, Kobayakawa Takakage became slow to act.

The problem is Kikkawa Motoharu's San'in army.

The powerful commander, Kikkawa Motoharu, was trying to take the two countries of San'in, Tajima and Tanba, in turn and was going to invade the capital from the San'in highway.

Tajima's daimyo, Yamana Suketoyo, was a small and weak daimyo and had been going back and forth between Oda and Mori until now. With Kikkawa Motoharu's army advancing, the possibility that he would change sides to Mori was high.

If Tajima falls, Tanba which is the door to the Kyoto from San'in would be in danger. If Kikkawa Motoharu takes Tanba, the Mori's huge army would be able to attack Kyoto all at once. And now, Nobuna was fighting against Kenshin and Shingen in the east.

In other words, the last line of defense on the Mori front is Tanba.

But the powerful clan of Tanba, the Hatanos, continued resisting the Mitsuhide army without submitting to the Oda house.

Nobuna entrusted Mitsuhide with the important mission of "the Tanba capture" once again, and she was going to put a lid on the Kikkawa Motoharu's road to the capital. But a herald came from this Mitsuhide.

"It is a serious matter, Nobuna-sama. Yamana Suketoyo of Tajima surrendered to Kikkawa Motoharu."

The breakthrough power of the courageous commander, Kikkawa Motoharu, the Oda clan's generals were not able to fully estimate it.

Kikkawa Motoharu has the exact opposite personality of her younger twin sister, Kobayakawa Takakage, and her method of fighting is also opposite.

Kobayakawa Takakage is a genius strategist who takes countries as if it was a chess problem, the strong general Kikkawa Motoharu merely beats down her opponents on the battlefield without thinking about anything.

Mitsuhide who fights slowly against her opponents using logic would be compatible with Kobayakawa Takakage who has a similar nature. “Bringing several fronts into a stalemate to avoid a final battle against multiple enemies at the same time”, it was supposed to be Nobuna’s perfect strategy to win in the Mori front.

But while Mitsuhide was setting up her schemes, Kikkawa Motoharu merely rushed forward without thinking, invaded the enemy territory, and conquered castles one after another.

Even worse, Mitsuhide was having a hard time dealing with the powerful families of Tanba that developed the so-called guerilla warfare and were hiding in the mountains. With her hands full with maintaining the Tanba front, she couldn’t deal with the explosive breakthrough power of the oncoming Motoharu.

“Kikkawa Motoharu’s army is already leaving Tajima for Tanba. The powerful local families of Tanba sided with Mori, Juubei is now the lone force in Tanba. I can only hold out for two weeks. The defeated army will be killed in the way of the samurai families. I don’t have regrets, but in this situation Tanba will be stolen by Kikkawa Motoharu. If Tanba is stolen now, the Oda army will be chased to Kyoto, the Imagawa Shogunate will collapse, and the Oda clan will fall.”

For that Akechi Mitsuhide to call for reinforcements had never happened before, everyone was shocked. Mitsuhide was a comrade with a lot of pride, even if she abandoned her duty and achievements, she would always save her Oda clan comrades by personally leading reinforcements.

For that Mitsuhide to be cornered, Kikkawa Motoharu -!

As expected, I might have been taking advantage of Juubei-chan all this time, Yoshiharu ground his back teeth and withstood the impulse to shout out.

Juubei-chan participated in the battles and sent reinforcements everywhere while sacrificing her own work in the Tanba front. She kept putting off her own dream of becoming a daimyo that rules over multiple prefectures to revive the Akechi clan, and continued helping us. When I was unconscious and near death during the Retreat of Kanegasaki, when I was cornered in Harima, when I lost my memories and challenged and lost to Nobuna in the naval battle as a member of the Mori army and almost sunk in the Osaka Bay, Juubei-chan always rescued me. As a result, she is now in this predicament.

But, the Echigo army has already invaded and attacked the Tedorigawa northern coast.

Nobuna can't move from Echizen.

"Hanbei. Kanbei. Is there a method to stop Mori's advance? If this goes on, Juubei..."

Hanbei and Kanbei answered Nobuna's question at the same time.

"Sob sob. Nobuna-sama has already been making preparations, there is no choice but to oppose the encirclement by making an even larger encirclement. I will enter into an alliance with Data Masamune of Oshu to fight Kanto. For Mori-"

"Sorin Otomo of Kyushu is the mortal enemy of the Mori clan. This Simeon has a connection to Sorin! Simeon will go to Bungo and try to mobilize Sorin."

The Christian daimyo Sorin Otomo, Yoshiharu raised his head as if he had woken up.

"That's right. Japan extends beyond the Oda encirclement! Oshu, Shikoku, and above all I completely forgot about the existence of Kyushu!"

"Oh dear~? Yoshiharu~? Perhaps Oshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu aren't recorded on future maps~?" Nobuna teased Yoshiharu.

"No, I'm ashamed. With the exception of Gunma, all of them are included in maps. Because Gunma is a previously unexplored region it is currently a blank spot on maps."

"Where is Gunma? In any case it was the right decision to build the seminary in Azuchi Castle and gather foreign exchange students from Kyushu to build friendly relationships with the Kyushu Christian daimyos!"

"Nobuna-sama. If we oppose the encirclement with a larger encirclement, this fight will stop being a local war of country versus country, it will become a nationwide battle. The victims will also increase. But, if we can win this bet, Tenka Fubu will be attained in one battle! This matter that should take tens of years, in just one battle. If defeated we will lose everything, if we win will capture the whole country. This is the true strategy Nobuna-sama was imagining."

"Mufu. Entrust Kyushu to this Simeon who has had the experience of living in Hakata. When it comes to the Namban, Sorin will completely wake up and get excited as she wants to make Japan a Christian kingdom. She'll probably put a double-edged sword condition of "entering into a Christian Missionary alliance", but in this case it is unavoidable!"

"However, Kuroda-dono has a past record where she fell to Ukita Naoie's plots and was confined to a dungeon. I'm worried about sending her alone as an emissary, fifty points," Nagahide put out a sober score.

Otomo Sorin is a Himekishi and a friend of Simeon so it is safe, Kanbei retorted. Nobuna and Hanbei had worried faces, “Harima races forward without thinking about the consequences, has a big mouth, and makes promises too hastily.” “I have heard that presently Otomo Sorin-sama is in conflict with the anti-Namban corps the “Shimazu family” for control of Kyushu. If she is asked to carelessly attack Mori, there is the possibility that it will cause a serious evil. Sob, sob.”

“All you, your words are as if you aren’t Simeon’s true friends! It’s fine, Sorin is probably...surely...f, friend...maybe she isn’t...ueeeen!”

“This alliance negotiation, we are low on days and not even the tiniest blunder can be allowed.... here Yoshiharu. I entrust this to you, the ultimate ladykiller!”

“EH!? Me?”

“With Kanbei, enter an alliance with Otomo Sorin! I entrust you with full authority! From the cessation of territory to the appointment of government officials, do as you like! Your time limit is two weeks. This is the only method to break the state of the war where we are surrounded by enemies and save Juubei who is alone in Tanba!”

“But I don’t know Otomo Sorin?”

“In this situation, the means don’t matter. Because I won’t be angry even if you put Sorin into your Rokujouin without permission. Nothing other than saving Juubei is important. If I lost Juubei...please!”

“...Alright. Setting aside Rokujouin, I will negotiate an alliance with Sorin-dono. Otomo Sorin is an ardent Christian. I also heard that the missionary Gaspard is serving as her advisor. I will have Frois-chan participate as well.”

“Fine. But if you commit some obscene behavior with Frois, then...”

“I won’t do that!”

“Oh dear. In that case I will go to Kyushu with my husband.” Because Imagawa Yoshimoto suggested this, Nobuna signaled Katsue and Inuchiyo with her eyes and Yoshimoto was kidnapped. “What did I do~” Yoshimoto who was running wild was dragged out of the room without discussion.

“Isn’t she becoming more and more brazen? I think that woman never had the intention of ending the wedding talk with Yoshiharu-dono as an act! In the first place, to bring a marriage partner to the location of alliance negotiations, that would be the worst impression!”

While Nobuna’s temple twitched she barely controlled the impulse to shout “Command Imagawa Yoshimoto to commit harakiri!”

“But the Shimazus of Satsuma who are aiming for complete control over Kyushu won’t stay silent if the Oda clan intervenes in Kyushu. Hanbei, do we have no choice but to send that guy to Satsuma? I’m a little worried when compared with Yoshiharu, but in order to get the pompous Shimazu house to listen, it can only be that guy.”

“Yes. If it is possible to suppress the Shimazus for a brief period of time, Otomo Sorin-sama can focus her efforts on the anti-Mori war. She can stop Mori’s advance.”

Hanbei nodded calmly.



As for Kobayakawa Takakage who leads the San’yo district forces of the conquerors of Chugoku, the Mori family, she restarted the march to Harima through the land route.

Takakage’s twin older sister who leads the San’in district’s army, Kikkawa Motoharu, had already advanced through the San’in district with the speed of a rapid wave.

“The way Takakage advances is so slow. Hurry up and steal Sagara Yoshiharu. Take Oda Nobuna down.” Motoharu sent urgent letters one after another.

“The Oda army was soundly beaten by Uesugi Kenshin in Kaga’s Tedorigawa, they fled, and Uesugi Kenshin’s illness started and the Echigo army has halted. How long are you going to hesitate over your judgements? The one who won was certainly Uesugi Kenshin, but that she is down due to illness is lucky. In addition, I’m worried about the Oda army’s easy way of escaping.”

Ukita Naoie, the daimyo who was forced into military service this time, pulled up next to Kobayakawa Takakage on horseback and asked, “How does Kobayakawa-ojousama see it? Can Kikkawa-ojousama crush Tanba with just force?”

If she replied carelessly, Ukita Naoie might immediately go over to the Oda clan.

Ukita Naoie was a man who bundled up a gift for war as a vassal and a genius at schemes resembling Mori Motonari. He was always sniffing around for the “winner” that he could entrust his daughter Hideie to after his death. In order to protect his daughter, Naoie would always change sides to the house that seemed like it was going to win at any given moment.

But, if I am unable to control this man I would be unqualified to enter this battle with the world at stake in the first place, Kobayakawa Takakage had already resolved herself.

“Oda Nobuna will try to build an even larger encirclement than the Oda encirclement to try to overcome this critical situation.”

“A large-scale encirclement?”

“That’s right. Oda Nobuna should be trying to make a net with the whole country to seal us. To restrain Uesugi and Takeda she will ally with Date Masamune of Oshu, and to stop the march of Mori she will join forces with Kyushu’s Otomo Sorin. Otomo Sorin is a Christian daimyo, and is the mortal enemy of Mori who has fought over north Kyushu for many years. Oda Nobuna will focus all of her efforts on an alliance with Otomo Sorin.”

“Oh ho. The Mori clan has Otomo Sorin as their weak point for some reason. Even the first generation Motonari gave up on north Kyushu and barely escaped Kyushu with his life. Isn’t this bad?”

“Plots and strategies mean a lot in Chugoku. Kyushu is where the countries of the ‘Kumaso’ and ‘Hayato’ amassed their war schools and is the world of carnage. Even if we are successful with three, four, or five traps, everything can be overturned in one all out battle. Power is the strongest. Military might is justice. The country of the Asura, it is the law of Kyushu. But now Kyushu is boiling over with an unprecedented Christian mania. The reason why Oda Nobuna built the seminary in Azuchi and gathered foreign exchange students from the Christian daimyos of Kyushu is to deepen friendships and and enter an alliance with them, including Otomo. In addition, Oda Nobuna will also move for Otomo Sorin’s arch-enemy, the four Shimazu sisters of Satsuma. To not let the Shimazu who are aiming at unifying Kyushu attack Otomo, she will strike with a harsh method. Because Otomo can focus all their efforts on Mori if Shimazu is sealed.”

“Oh my, that fellow is so far-sighted, Ojou-sama. Oda Nobuna is formidable. If Otomo hits us from behind, we won’t be able to proceed to the capital. What about Mori’s crazed march as of now?”

“...Oda Nobuna thought of it, but I was one step ahead. I have already played my hand. Shimazu will not abandon their ambition of unifying Kyushu, and will fight a decisive battle with their old enemy Otomo Sorin.”

Kobayakawa Takakage closed her eyes, and smiled quietly while feeling the sea breeze that blew in from Harima’s sea.

“Finally, this war with Oda Nobuna, from Oshu to Kyushu, it will be a war on the nationwide scale including all of the countries of Japan. Even if there are many twists and turns, both of us are aligned, the ‘war’ that Oda Nobuna and I envision will be realized. These chaotic times that have lasted for one hundred years will come to an end with this oncoming ‘war’.”

Ukita Naoie had never seen the form of Kobayakawa Takakage charging forward without any hesitation like this before.

“Between mortal enemies, they are aligned, is that it? Moreover, they are opponents who have never met. Is such a feat possible?”

Takakage nodded proudly.

“Because Oda Nobuna and I, now, have the same dream.”



Kaga, Mattou castle.

The battle front of the Echigo Army that subjugated all of Kaga following Ecchu and Noto after the Shibata Katsue army fled in Tedorigawa.

The sound of a biwa resounded in the parlor of the center area.

Not the former sound filled with calm and loneliness, it was a passionate tone like piled up emotions were exploding.

Suddenly, Kenshin stopped her hands.

“It’s strange, Kanetsugu. The moon this evening is strangely red.”

Nonchalantly, she looked up at the night sky.

Naoe Kanetsugu was standing next to Kenshin.

“From Oda Nobuna who has entered Echizen, some gifts have been sent to Kenshin-sama.”

“To the opponent she will fight a decisive battle with from now on, she sent gifts? Is it possibly salt?”

“One is the ‘Views in and around Kyoto’ folding screen. The former shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiteru, dreamed of the day that the justice warrior Kenshin-sama who became the kanrei would proceed to the capital and subjugate this chaotic world. Since this ‘Views in and around Kyoto screen’ is prompting Kenshin-sama to visit the capital, it seems that this is something that Yoshiteru ordered from the genius illustrator Kano Eitoku. Kano Eitoku had a premonition that this picture would push Kenshin-sama to move and would change the history of Japan, and continued to work day and night to make his “life’s masterpiece”, but because Yoshiteru was driven out of Kyoto before the picture was completed it remained unfinished in the hands of Kano Eitoku. It seems that Oda Nobuna placed an order for this masterpiece again and had it completed.”

When Kenshin turned and looked behind her, the golden ‘Views in and around Kyoto’ was displayed in the room.

The image of the revived capital of Kyoto that had been destroyed by continual wars and revolts since the Onin war, Eitoku’s bold brush strokes and gorgeous color usage had finished the painting magnificently.

On the right, the Yamato Gosho, Enryakuji Temple, Kiyomizu temple, Gojobashi, the touring of Yamahoko.

On the left, Kurama Temple, the Golden Pavilion, the funeral ceremony, the togetsu bridge at Arashiyama.

The many people who were drawn in the golden city – the townsfolk, the noble samurai, and the total number reached almost 2500.

Kenshin stared at the dazzling picture on the folding screen.

“They all seem as if they are alive.”

Among those people, there was a little girl dressed as a miko, a Himekishi with a wide forehead posing with a pistol and wearing Namban shoes, and a missionary with blue eyes.

And, the figure of a petite Himekishi who was pure white just like a snow fairy.

The Himekishi who grasped a bamboo staff in her hands, was not carried out on a palanquin carried by the vassals’ troops.

On her own feet, she stepped on the ground of Kyoto, walking.

There was a girl wearing a Namban hat and a crimson mantle, a small monkey riding on the girl’s shoulder, and the figure of a large warrior maiden with long bright red hair, carrying an O-bon lantern and waiting for the white Himekishi.

“Kanetsugu. This girl with white skin and red eyes?”

“That is Kenshin-sama. Oda Nobuna is calling Kenshin-sama to the capital. It can be seen as a magnificent challenge, but she may have also wanted to convey the will that when the age of war is over, she will invite Takeda Shingen and you to meet in the capital as friends. Or maybe it was all of those.”

“But. This girl isn’t wearing the priest hood. Besides, I don’t wear clothes like this. Such flashy red clothes. Such brilliant, vivid, clothes like a maiden in love, they don’t suit me.”

“I may bite my tongue, but it seems to be called, ‘Crimson snow petals doubuku’ The real thing was sent. Here.”

TL Note: The doubuku is the the layer of clothing seen after a samurai removed his armor.

A sliding paper door opened suddenly and Kenshin’s eyes looked in.

Dazzling, the red body clothes gave off a gorgeous brightness.

Red.

It was red to a shocking extent.

Is the snow willow pattern inlaid in the red cloth supposed to represent the snow of Echigo?

For Kenshin, this kind of feminine clothes that almost seemed to be from a dream, had never been worn.

Bishamonten is abstinent. It does not come down to earth. The figure of a charming young girl. It was not necessary to show anyone, and there was never an opportunity.

That was how it should be – until yesterday.

But now.

While being confused by the feelings that were rising inside herself as if they were going to explode, Kanetsugu went behind her and finished helping her put on the crimson clothes.

“It looks very good. The numerous princesses that appear in ‘The Tale of Genji’ don’t match the loveliness of Kenshin-sama.”

“Ah. Kanetsugu. I have held a desire. The deep desire that not even Takeda Shingen held. I want to obtain it, I wonder if it is okay.”

“Yes. Humans fight in order to obtain their dreams.”

“May I dance? I want to practice. One day, rather than alone, in order to dance with that person.”

“Yes. To your heart’s content. This Kanetsugu will play the biwa.”

Kenshin danced. While a soft smile appeared on her lips.

Now that I have come down to earth, let’s settle this.

Betting each other’s dreams, betting the things we desire, let’s fight.

Not as Bishamonten and demon king, but as human and human.

